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Spring 1995  
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# TIME SCREEN

The Magazine of British Telefantasy



**BRITISH TELEFANTASY IN COMICS**

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**"A.R. McKay"**

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Compiled by Andrew Pixley

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For each strip we give details of: storylines, synopses, issues and order and artist credits etc.

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Published weekly by Polyway Publications Ltd

Edited by Dennis Hooper

Issue 1 (26th February 1971) to Issue 58 (25th March 1972), then becomes *TV ACTION + COUNTDOWN* [note: headed *COUNTDOWN* for *TV ACTION*! from Issue 47 (1st January 1972) and *TV ACTION* in *COUNTDOWN* from Issue 57 (18th March 1972)]

U.F.O. (20/02/71 - 25/03/72: cont.)

1 [Art: John Dineen, b/w-photo]

Colonel Freeman investigates the latest landing of a UFO and the disappearance of several scientists at some ruins.

2-8 [Art: Gary Haylock, col]

The Clanton runs an exposé on SHADO and the aliens indicating that there is a traitor in the organisation.

7-11 The OM at 32 [Art: Gary Haylock, col]

Colonel Frank Harris is believed to be too slow for active duty as SHADO's eldest astronaut when he reaches 32.

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by Anthony and Annette McKay

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Front Cover: Artwork by Andrew Pixley inspired by Frank Bellamy, Alan Barron, John Barr, Rex Emberton, Ian Gibson, Gary Haylock, Ian Kennedy, Duan Motter, Mike Noble, John Stokes and Ron Turner.

Back Cover: *THE AVENGERS*, *DIANA* © D.C. Thomson & Co. 1967

# TIME SCREEN

The Magazine of British Telefantasy

Scanned by Zeg

Number 21  
Spring 1995  
**ENGAGE**  
MARKETING

Editor **ANTHONY MCKAY**

Publisher **DAVID NIGHTINGALE**

Consultant/Writer: **ANDREW PIXLEY**

## INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, I would have ignored the bulk of what you see here. To me, comics were something to fill the pages when you couldn't afford articles or photographs on your favourite TV series. Although I studied art, I was far more interested in the written detail rather than reading new stories. Then about six years ago, this all changed. Suddenly the complexity and range of the comic strip creation blossomed before my maturing eyes. Aided and encouraged by many of those listed below, I began my more methodical examination of the new undiscovered country.

Most of what I talk about here - it has to be admitted - is awful. TV based material seldom merited more than minimal work in the Sixties and Seventies, with the title and content alone expected to sell the product. As long as the figure wears a dark suit and a bowler, it is Steed - regardless of facial discrepancies. As long as a police box appears with an old man - it is Doctor Who, despite the fact that his adventures are either more whimsical or bloodthirsty than what appeared on the small screen.

But then there are gems. Some artwork so breathtaking in its detail that it puts the TV version to shame. Some stories exploring notions too deep for a mere thirty minutes of television. Some combinations of both that must simply be treasured and adored. I hope that this work helps others find gems for themselves.

To comic strip fans - I apologise for stating the obvious about comics. To TV fans - I apologise for stating the obvious about TV. I hope to have produced something palatable for both groups (although I feel my TV background may predominate).

As with many *TIME SCREEN* projects, this is just the culmination of the work of many, many people - some who have contributed large amounts of data, some who have just supplied that odd elusive little fact to fill a gap. I express my deepest thanks to all of them and shall attempt to recall all of them here and now:

John Arnworth, for background information on the world of *Doctor Who*; Neil Alsop, for enthusiasm, encouragement, advice and an amazing set of *TV Century 21*; Keith Ansell, for notes sent to Graeme Bassett; Graeme Bassett, for trivia too extensive to go into; Colin Bayley, for letting us see the Gold Key *Avengers* comic; Chris Bentley, for his superb details on the *American Space:1999* comics; Graham Bleathman, for notes on elusive Sixties specials and admiration for his cutaways; Julie Cartwright for her excellent spaghetti; Dave Broomhead (Sheffield Space Centre), for letting me view his stock of awful *TV21* and *Joe 90s* which I hope he has managed to sell; Kevin Davies (of Southport), for advice on *Blake's 7* and *Captain Scarlet* matters; Alan Fennell, for answering some questions on the 'phone once; Milton Finsilver, for another fascinating 'phone call about the *TV 21* days; John Freeman, for wisdom and advice on all the bizarre things Marvel UK did; Christopher Gabb, for getting me interested in comics; Simeon Heam, for tracking down elusive text story writers; Alice Hendry, for various rare odds and ends she was selling off; Paul Hicking, for telling me about *House of Horror*;

## Editorial

TIME SCREEN  
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Welcome, at last, to issue 21 which has proved to have been something of a mammoth project. Andrew Pixley provided me with both an article on, and a complete listing of, British Telefantasy featured in comics for this issue. Unfortunately the magazine would have had to be one hundred pages long to include all the material that he had compiled. No matter how much I would like to have published a bumper-sized magazine the costs would have been far too high in order to bring as much of this research to you as conveniently and cheaply as possible I have squeezed the article with illustrations into this issue and am publishing the listing separately as a photocopied special similar to *AVENGERLAND*, see the advert opposite. I have tried to reproduce examples of artwork faithfully where possible but in some cases, especially for colour material, I have used a half-tone process to ensure good reproduction. In many cases this does not reflect the subtle style of the original.

This issue has been a pleasure to put together and to edit and I hope you enjoy the results.

Until issue 8 - Stay alert!

Anthony R. McKay

Steve Holland, for a brief 'phone call and a useful name; David J. Howe, for all manner of *Doctor Who* miscellanea; Anthony McKay, for friendship, editorial control and access to all manner of goodies; Stephen McKay, for bizarre times in Liverpool and an extensive range of miscellanea; Dave Nightingale, for his faith in *TIME SCREEN* and all the wonderful reprints in his own magazines; Mike Pearce (Forbidden Planet, Nottingham), for letting me study things at great length in his shop; Michael Richardson, for selling me the few back issues of *Doctor Who Weekly* I needed; John Ridgway, for talking to me at Manchester; Dave Rogers, for initial information on *Avengers* material and odd reprints in his own fanzine; Gary Russell, for various lists and throwing his *Beet* cut-offs in my direction; Lew Stringer, for advice and sustaining a minor heart-attack about Fleetway; Lee Sullivan, for explaining something to me - can't recall what; Stephen James Walker, for telling me how the good Doctor sorted out *Death's Head*; Dr. Martin Wiggins, for his odd Stripped Asset material and helping out with photostats of holiday specials; the Staff of Cambridge University Library, for letting me read their copies of *Look-in* and *Lady Penelope* amongst the dusty backcases of academic; the Staff of the National Newspaper Library at Colindale, for bringing me promptly the volumes that filled most of the gaps.

Andrew Pixley, December 1994

### DEDICATED TO THE MEMORIES OF

FRANK BELLAMY

RON EMBLETON

FRANK HAMPSON

KEITH WATSON

### THE BACKGROUND

#### IN THE BEGINNING

The actual history of comics stems back as early as 1796 with the issue of *THE COMICK MAGAZINE* in London on April Fool's day. From here they have continued to grow - partly through the satirical magazines of the nineteenth century, to become a worldwide hobby in the twentieth. Particularly in the last decade comics have moved out of corner shops into specialist shops where a more adult approach was taken to the costumed crusaders of the Funties and Fifties. In the Fifties, the market in Britain was dominated by 'funnies' for younger children (e.g. *BEANO*, established 1938) and comics based on famous comedians of stage and cinema screen (e.g. *FILM FUN*, established in the 1920s). From America were imported a wider variety of titles which dealt with superheroes and rather graphic horror. Other principal markets catered for were 'girls' comics, science fiction, war stories and westerns.

However, whilst the world of comics is large enough to fill many volumes, this publication sets out to study the comic approach to the subject of British Telefantasy - the adaptation into graphic adventure form of television series created and/or made in Britain which have a science-fiction or fantasy content. One non-TV comic that is a key stepping-stone along the way was *EAGLE*, Hulton Press' quality British adventure comic that debuted with a first cover date of 14th April 1950. In this title, artwork was of a far higher calibre than seen before with four-colour photogravure printing, and as a result of this the comic flourished. Top artists who later worked on TV comic strips began on *EAGLE*. The adventure aspect was most noticeable in *Dan Dare - Pilot of the Future*, developed and drawn by a team of artists run by the late Frank Hampson.

Television comics also seem to begin in 1950 with the US publication called *TELEVISION COMICS* (which didn't actually feature any TV stars). In the coming years, many American television series would be converted to comic book form by the likes of D.C. Comics, Gold Key and Charlton. The first comic related to characters from British television in particular (and later a home for many British telefantasy characters) was *TV COMIC*, starting with Issue 1 dated 9th November 1951. The publishers were the News of the World Group, who owned the photogravure printers of Eric Beameson Ltd.

Although bearing the name *TV COMIC*, the TV content was actually very low, counting primarily of the marionette *Muffin the Mule* (drawn by Neville Munn), *Mr Pooty* and *Tommy Cooper Towards the end of the decade*, *TV COMIC* was sold to Beaverbrook, who already published *EXPRESS WEEKLY*. At this stage, *FILM FUN* had been running for years, and with the Filma television boom soon featured television favourites such as Ken Dodd, Frankie Howerd and Tony Hancock. Eventually this spawned *TV FUN* in 1953 which included Jack Warner and Jimmy Edwards before becoming the girl's comic *TV FAN* in 1959.

#### TV ARRIVES

L. Miller, a British publisher of reprint material, cashed in with *TV HEROES* (edited by Mick Anglo) which covered public domain figures such as Robin Hood, Sir Lancelot and William Tell - ensuring that their likenesses did not match those of Richard Green, William Russell or Conrad Phillips. A truly TV related publication of the Fifties was *TV PICTURE STORIES*, published by Pearson from 1958. Each fortnightly issue was devoted to a specific series, including *SWORD OF FREEDOM*, *WILLIAM TELL*, *THE BUCCANEERS*, *MURDER BAG*, *THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD* and *DIXON OF DOCK GREEN* before it ceased in March 1960. Pearson were also responsible for six issues of *TV PHOTO STORIES* from January to March 1960, including *WILLIAM TELL*, *DIAL 999* and *THE BUCCANEERS*.

*TV LAND* had appeared from TV Publications (Issue 1: 1st October 1960) carrying *Larry the Lamb* (by Neville Munn) and *Ivor the Engine*. Also in November 1960, Anglo Comics launched the monthly *TV FEATURES* which ran for eight issues - edited by Anglo and based on *TV HEROES*. The following year, Munn moved from *TV LAND* back to *TV COMIC* to take on a strip based on Gerry Anderson's puppet series for Granada, a woman called *FOUR FEATHER FALLS*. At the same *TV EXPRESS*, a descendant of *EXPRESS WEEKLY* was showcasing adventures with *Colossus Photo* played by Bernard Archard as in *SPYCATCHER*, plus

Raymond Francis as Inspector Lockhart in *No Hiding Place*. By the late Fifties the comics in the Express group, such as *TV COMIC*, had been sold off to TV Publications, part of the Rediffusion Holdings group who published the regional ITV listings and also held the franchise to transmit commercial programmes in London on weekdays.

### 1960 - 1964

#### THE WONDER OF THE AGE

The first British telefantasy series to make the jump into the comic medium was *SUPERCAR*. There were several reasons for this; primarily, it was a series running to an initial twenty-six episodes instead of a six or seven episode serial which would be gone and forgotten all too soon. As a film product, it also stood a high chance of success, which *THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD* and the like were proving. The previous three puppet series from AP Films, the company run by Gerry Anderson, Reg Hill and Anderson's wife Sylvia, had all been popular children's shows, and *FOUR FEATHER FALLS* was successful in *TV COMIC* (this strip was partly written by Alex Fennell who would later work for Anderson). The other plus for the show was the central piece of hardware in Supercar itself, which had obvious merchandising applications. ATV-London debuted the new series in January 1961, and *TV Publications* were not slow off the mark to cash in.

In Issue 482 (11th March 1961) of *TV COMIC*, *Supercar* was announced. The two page strip printed in black with a spot colour (red) was drawn by T. Watts. Settling in amongst the last few issues of *Muffin the Mule*, *The Mule*, *The Lone Ranger* by Mike Noble and *Four Feather Falls*, Watts' *Supercar* humanised the rather caricatured puppets from the television series, whilst presenting some exciting stories by Fennell and others which adhered to the format viewers would be used to. Masterson and Zarin were continually bashing plots foiled by Mike Mercury and his friends, with each story generally having a cliff-hanger into the next tale. The strip became black and white from Issue 499 (8th July 1961), this particular serial introducing Beaker's father, a character who would return and was continually leading hazardous expeditions in remote parts of the Amazon.



TV COMIC: *Supercar* (1961) - Colour artwork by Bill Mavin

*TV COMIC* underwent a revamp with Issue 508 (9th September 1961), a boost for *Supercar*, which was now given a four colour centrepiece each issue. The art was now produced by Bill Mavin, an artist who had joined *TV COMIC* from *TV EXPRESS* and had been illustrating *Larry the Lamb*. Unlike Watts' humanised artwork, Mavin's far bolder strip kept the characters more akin to their puppet counterparts and gave the stories a lighter, comical air. *TV COMIC* was now one of the better produced comics around, being a mixture of four colour and standard black and white photogravure pages. The popularity of *Supercar* prompted the launch of the 'Supercar Club', with Mike Mercury delivering a quarter page message once a month under the banner *Goon Mike*, in which he tackled a variety of serious issues (such as encouraging children not to be afraid of wearing spectacles). As with the Watts serials, many of the early Mavin stories dovetailed into one another. A long series of stories concerned the testing of a submarine which, as usual, was a target for Masterson and Zarin.

At the start of 1962, *TV EXPRESS* was merged into *TV COMIC*, changing the title to *TV COMIC AND EXPRESS* for Issues 517 and 518 (20th and

27th January 1962). A week later, *TV LAND* was also absorbed with far less of a fanfare. Because of the revamp and the new readers joining mid-way through the serial, from Issue 527 it was usual for a reprise of the story to be introduced by one of the characters. With the sub-series storyline ending around March 1962, the *Supercar* team were able to travel back to base, whereafter the strips returned to the standard elements of Beaker's new inventions being tested, crimes by Mustertop being thwarted or Beaker's father again being rescued (this time in Peru).

## THE FASTEST GUY ALIVE

The next new blockbuster strip that *TV COMIC* would acquire was the latest creation of Gerry and Sylvia Anderson's, *FIREBALL XLS* began its run on ATV-London on 28th October 1962. This time, *TV COMIC* got in early, and *Fireball XLS* made its two page black and white debut in Issue 565 (13th October 1962). This was a re-launch issue for *TV COMIC*, with a cardboard model of *Supercar* given away inside. *Fireball XLS* was a direct replacement for *Four Feather Falls* and inherited Neville Martin, who did illustrations that were suitable for a juvenile comic, but whose simplistic style did not capture the excitement of the first real British space opera. Main had also worked a *TV LAND*, drawing strips based on the Roberts Leigh/Gerry Anderson series *THE ADVENTURES OF TWIZZLE*. *Fireball XLS* sailed alongside *Supercar* as the most popular strip in the comic, and over Christmas 1962 even *Lenny the Lion* was reluctant to miss an adventure with *Steve Zodiac* on his TV (in the new year, Lenny even attempted to build his own spaceship, Steamball LX2).



*TV COMIC Fireball XLS* (1962) - Black and white artwork by Neville Martin

Regarding other *TV COMIC* strips intruding into the British Telefantasy world, during its first run of *TV Terror* actually featured spoofs of well known TV shows: *ITP'S H.G. WELLS' INVISIBLE MAN* got this treatment in Issue 558 (25th August 1962), whilst the trio of *Terrors* met *Ally Blackwood* of 'Tales of Mystery' in Issue 579 (19th January 1963) - spoofing the anthology *TALES OF MYSTERY* introduced by John Lash. Another notable entry was Issue 568 (3rd November 1962) which featured 'Danger Boy' who closely resembled Patrick McGoonan.

## AMERICAN GOLD

*SUPERCAR* was also to become the first British telefantasy series to gain its own comic. In addition to its strip in *TV COMIC*, Gold Key comics decided to add the show to its catalogue of titles following the interest in the show's successful syndication in America. *Supercar* Issue 1 appeared in November 1962 and would spawn three more quarterly issues up to August 1963.



## HOLIDAY FUN

*Supercar* and *Fireball XLS* continued to head the line-up in *TV COMIC*, featuring heavily in *TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL* issued in June 1963. The former strip saw the introduction of a new semi-regular villain, the Hood, an evil genius who wears a mask akin to that of Zero and had no connection with his namesake from *THUNDERBOLTS*.

Meanwhile in the year of 2063, the crew of *Fireball XLS* were getting involved in a string of generally routine adventures which tended to comprise of crash landings, 'living' plants, Earth invasions and the like. A

storyline which began in Issue 595 (11th May 1963) concerned Zoonia getting on board *Fireball XLS* and accidentally launching the craft by mistaking the phrase "Countdown Blast off" which he heard on *Venus*' latest pop record. Robert the Robot, bearing the command, does just that - in a very similar manner to the episode *Drama at Space City*. Later storylines dealt with space pirates, another common theme explored in the *TV* series.

## THE FIREBALL XLS

*FIREBALL XLS* was to be Gerry and Sylvia Anderson's greatest success in the USA where the series was networked by NBC during 1963. Thus *FIREBALL XLS* acquired its own one-off comic from Gold Key in January 1964, with the only edition - Issue 1 - of *STEVE ZODIAC AND THE FIREBALL XLS*, with art possibly by Paul Norris. This



material was far more graphic and action-packed than Main's more routine renditions, with Steve, Mat and Venus looking more like traditional American heroes. The most peculiar aspect of the issue was the references to the famous WSP craft as the *XLS* or 'the *Fireball XLS*'.



## TELEVARSITY CHALLENGE

The flights of *Supercar* and *Fireball XLS* continued in *TV COMIC* until 1964 when their licences were withdrawn by AP (Merchandising) Ltd, a new merchandise arm of AP Films - for reasons which would become clear later. Before that, both featured strongly in *TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL* in May 1964. *Supercar*'s adventures continued to dominate the colour centre pages with worthy adversaries such as the fighting boating Dr. Zeas, and also another Amazon romp with Professor Beaker. Another series of connected storylines began in Issue 646 (2nd May 1964) in which it was declared that Jimmy Gibson was now old enough to study, and so would be taken to England to board at Dr. Nolan's TeleVarsity (itself the basis for a test story that had recently appeared in *TV COMIC* concerning a university of the future). Before the *Supercar* team could reach the TeleVarsity, they encountered Cynthia Nutty, a girl who could float in the air thanks to her father's anti-gravity belt (which naturally Mustertop wanted to steal). The Nuttys turned out to be aliens in subsequent issues, during which Jimmy obtained a machine known as a thought projector. This featured in the next two serials in which Mustertop and a vagrant got hold of the device, which the Nuttys also wanted back. After some routine 'rescue' and 'experiment' storylines, *Supercar* ended its three-and-a-half year run in Issue 667 (26th September 1964) - to be replaced by a new telefantasy strip. *Fireball XLS* ran slightly longer than its predecessor and Steve Zodiac flew off to more colourful climes with Issue 672 (31st October 1964).

## SUPER SPACE PATROL

A short lived fortnightly comic was *Young World Publications' SUPER MAG* which was printed in Belgium. This generally consisted of reprints from American comics, and would highlight a different series each issue. Issue 12 (June 1964) and Issue 24 (December 1964) covered *SPACE PATROL* with R. Paul Hoye rendering the adventures of Larry Dart's crew in at least the first of the comic books. Although the title *SUPER MAG* was dropped with Issue 20 (c. October 1964), the numbering scheme continued on a variety of other titles up to Issue 28. As it turned out, *SPACE PATROL* was to gain a permanent home around the same time in *TV COMIC*.

## YABBA RAYS ON!

Deprived of the Supermarionation successes of SUPERCAR and FIREBALL XLS, the editors of TV COMIC required similar items to replace these two highly successful elements. The first of these was *Space Patrol*. The television version of SPACE PATROL (US Title: PLANET PATROL), another puppet space opera, had started screening around April 1963. Created by Roberta Leigh, a former associate with Gerry Anderson, SPACE PATROL was very similar to FIREBALL XLS, and would afford similar comic style stories, all of which were credited to Leigh herself (who wrote all the television episodes).



TV COMIC *Space Patrol* (1965) - Colour artwork by Bill Mevin

*Space Patrol* immediately replaced *Supercar* as the colour centrepiece from Issue 668 (3rd October 1964) and retained Bill Mevin. The strip reused a number of storyline elements from *Fireball XLS* and likewise had rather juvenile and unlikely tales - although these were more in keeping with the TV series. Mevin's suitably graphic art allowed viewers of the monochrome TV episodes to now see that whilst Captain Larry Dart was the usual colour of human beings, the other crew of the *Gaia* sphere 347 were more diverse. Husky the Martian had green skin, whilst Slim the Venusian was a tasteful shade of blue. SPACE PATROL had episodic screenings and by 1965 was seldom seen. After eleven serials *Space Patrol* ended in Issue 719 (25th September 1965).

The other new strip for TV COMIC was historically far more important, based on a BBC science-fiction adventure that made its debut on 23rd November 1963. DOCTOR WHO had scored quite a hit in its first few weeks with the introduction of the Daleks, and during the spring of 1964 the series was guaranteed a second season, with further Dalek stories promised. TV Publications secured an agreement to produce a *Doctor Who* strip featuring the TARDIS and the Doctor as played by William Hartnell (although none of the Doctor's companions were to appear). *Doctor Who* replaced *Fireball XLS* and began in Issue 674 (14th November 1964) a few weeks after the start of its second season on BBC1. Covering the first two black and white pages, it inherited Mevin's rather cute stylised art.

The long running strip life of the Doctor, or rather *Doctor Who* as he was usually referred to, began with a visit by the Doctor's grandchildren John and Gillian to their grandfather's home. This turned out to be a yard, empty apart from a police box, inside which Dr. Who explained that the police box was really one of his inventions, a time machine - although it was not referred to as the TARDIS at this stage. John's curiosity activated the time machine, flinging the craft into the thirtieth century. Thus began what would be a long sequence of episodic serials, some of which fell back on tried and trusted scenarios of *Fireball XLS* and *Space Patrol*.

### LOOK FOR THE AVENGERS

During the Spring of 1964, ABC's offbeat thriller series THE AVENGERS appeared in a serialised comic form for the first time inside the pages of LOOK MAGAZINE. Very little is known about this publication, aside from the fact that the black and white one page instalment saw Patrick Macnee's John Steed working alongside Honor Blackman's Mrs Catherine Gale to battle a computer which aimed to gun power over people via an important television transmission.

1965 - 1969

## CENTURY 21 IS GO!

The reason for TV COMIC losing *Supercar* and *Fireball XLS* from was a publication that debuted at the start of 1965 and was another leap forward for British comics on par with the introduction of EAGLE. It was a new quality comic, created specifically for SF TV shows: TV CENTURY 21.

TV CENTURY 21 was developed during the summer of 1964 as an offshoot from AP Film Merchandising (which would later become Century 21 Merchandising). The comic was the concept of Keith Shackleton along with Alan Fennell, who, due to his work on the strips of *Four Feather Falls* and *Supercar* had become a scriptwriter on FIREBALL XLS during 1961 and then on STINGRAY. His background in comics made him an ideal editor on the new publication. In 1964, the Supermarionation series created by the Andersons were extremely popular with children: SUPERCAR was on its second or third transmission, with FIREBALL XLS into its first repeats. STINGRAY, AP's first colour series was in the can and would be on air during October 1964. Work was also well underway on another new series called THUNDERBIRDS.

The options on a *Stingray* strip for TV COMIC had not been offered when APF decided to incorporate it into their new comic, a magazine which would take the readers a century into the future: TV CENTURY 21. The comic was to be published every Tuesday (the cover states Wednesday but generally comics were issued the day before) with each issue offering twenty pages, of which the cover, centrefold and two other two-page strips would be printed in four colour photogravure - an exceptionally large amount of colour. Working for Fennell were assistant editor Ted Sullivan, script editor Angus Allan, art editor Dennis Hooper and chief sub-editor Gillian Allen (Angus' wife). APF Merchandising provided the art, scripts and editorial whilst City Magazines (another arm of the News of the World Group) handled publishing and distribution.

One of the most notable aspects of TV CENTURY 21's image was its original style of cover - and indeed its general use of pure typographic imagery. Since the comic was a non-stapled tabloid publication, the frontage was designed as that of a newspaper. Headlines written by Gillian Allen covered the dangerous mission of Colored Zodiac and Captain Tempest with colour photos taken by Doug Luke, enticing the readers to turn to the relevant strip for the latest update on the world-shattering situation. The last panel on the back cover carried 'Stop Press' information, teasing the reader about developments the following week. The deadline was a hundred years in the future, so No. 1 Universe Edition bore the date January 23rd 2065 on the cover when it went on sale in January 1965 with the headline STINGRAY LOST!



TV CENTURY 21 *Fireball XLS* (1965) - Colour artwork by Mike Noble

*Fireball XLS* occupied two colour pages and was drawn by Graham Coxon. The same luxury was afforded to *Stingray*, with Ron Embleton (best known for *Waf the Broom* in EXPRESS WEEKLY) handling the art chores, gently using colours to show depth and action in his work. Embleton's notable and prolific career included one-shots for Science in the late Forties/early Fifties, various Fifties western comics (often with his brother Gerry), *Tornado* in OH BOY! Comics, *Forgotten City*, and Tom O'London in COMIC CUTS *Rocky Stone* in LONG STAR MAGAZINE, *Strangest* the Mighty in MICKY MOUSE WEEKLY, *Siggler* and *Colonel Pinto* on TV EXPRESS, *Wrath of the Gods* in BOY'S WORLD and *Johnny Frog* in EAGLE. His SF work included SPACEMAN and STAR ROCKET. Embleton was just one of several artists to move from EAGLE in the wake of its second buy-out. Berton House based at 161-165 Fleet Street, and with AP Merchandising at 167 Fleet Street, it was not far for disillusioned artists to walk.

## WE ARE ABOUT TO LAUNCH STINGRAY

*Stingray* was written initially by Hooper or Fennell, and amongst Embleton's art on the first three serials were small colour photographs from the programme. The strip introduced elements of the forthcoming THUNDERBIRDS series, such as the *Fireball* attacked by the *Creatavans* in a serial that also featured the *Sidewinder* from PH of PERIL. It should be noted that many of the storylines, particularly in *Stingray*, deviated into one another and the division into stories in this work is often done on a

personal analysis. Generally the writers tended to rotate, with Sullivan and Hooper handling *Fireball XL5* and *Stingray*.

*Supercar*, which did not fit in with the new Anderson universe was turned into a two page 'funny' strip, i.e. a humorous item, of wacky 1960s adventures with Mike Mercury and the gang. Accorded two pages in black and white, the series, with a new page every week, were initially drawn by Tolédano in a suitably stylised manner.



TV CENTURY 21: *Stingray* (1966) - Colour artwork by Ron Embellata

Although THUNDERBIRDS was still nine months away from its TV debut, the series was previewed in the espionage strip *Lady Penelope*. The strips, written at first by Fennell and then Sullivan, chronicled the first meeting of Lady Penelope Creighton-Ward with Parker as he tried to rob her house, and their first adventure together, pitting themselves against Mr Steelman, a rebel controlling villains who would stare on a semi-regular basis. Another enemy who cropped up in November 1965 was the Hood, a hiding master of disguise who had by that time also appeared on television. At this point, Lady Penelope was an aristocrat who took on dangerous and daring missions to fulfil her thirst for excitement.

Because of the generally united vision of the world presented in *Fireball XL5* and *Stingray*, some new generic bad-guys were needed. Thus the repressive regime of Berzank was thought up, filling the role of the Eastern Bloc states in *Series* spy fiction. Penelope's strip, drawn and coloured in a



TV CENTURY 21: *Supercar* (1965) - Artwork by Tolédano

bold style by the late Eric Eden, was an excellent fodder into the new ITC show in Autumn 1965, and also offered a character catering for female readers. At the foot of the strip for the first few weeks, Lady Penelope herself investigated a variety of film and TV stars with brief interviews. The artwork showcased the soft artwork world of Eden who, after a spell in advertising, had been a regular writer/artist on *Don Dare* and was another escape from EAGLE.

## RELAYED FROM HYPER-SPACE

Noting the success of the Daleks in DOCTOR WHO, and of the annual style publication *The Dalek Book*, AF Merchandising managed to get the comic rights to the metal monsters from Skaro. This formed the colour strip on TV CENTURY 21's back page *The Daleks*. Although credited to Terry Nation, the creator of the Daleks, the strips were generally written by David Whitaker, the original story editor on DOCTOR WHO who developed the idea of showing the development of the Daleks with Fennell along with assistance from Angus Allen. Richard Jennings, who had produced some suitably atmospheric colour strips for *The Dalek Book* and had drawn *Storm Nelson* and *Island of Fire* for EAGLE, was contracted to provide the artwork for the serials. Although his early work depicted the Daleks as being somewhat thinner than they were on television (possibly with help from a fill-in artist on some issues) Jennings' Daleks filled out, to such an extent that the tale panel had to be redrawn with Issue 7 (6th March 1965).

The storylines started with the war between Daleks and Thals on Skaro, as referred to in original Dalek TV serial, and saw how a robot fighting machine developed by the Daleks became the first Daleks, a means of survival for other stranded Daleks. The Daleks were ruled by an Emperor with a huge golden globe for a head, and over the next

few storylines the Daleks were seen to learn the secrets of space travel, heading away from Skaro to become engaged in combat with other species on other world. The strip was run at a time when Dalekmania was at its height. During the summer, the Aard movie DR WHO AND THE DALEKS was heavily promoted in features and competitions in TV CENTURY 21, particularly in Issue 23 (26th June 1965) and Issue 28 (31st July 1965).

Other TV tie-in strips in TV CENTURY 21 included *Burke's Law* drawn by Patrick Williams (another EAGLE artist who had drawn *The Concept of Everyon* and *Paul Trevillion*, and *My Favourite Martian* by Bill Titcombe. The latter of these fitted well into the comic, whilst the other, like *Supercar*, was presented as a flashback to the last century. Miscellaneous other items included Anderson musician Barry Gray's item *Music Box* and a comic ending with the misophili *Zoony the Lemong*.

Colan was replaced after the first *Fireball XL5* serial by Mike Noble (replacing his westerns in TV COMIC), whose smooth use of colour amongst duller dark graphics had made him the key artist associated with the strip. In comparison, Colan's work was rather pale and bland. Graduating from *Simon and Sally* in ROBIN in the Fifties, Noble's ability to capture likeness and movement with his bold use of colour meant that he would carve a steady career as strip work related to television series for many years.

A clever ploy was attempted to link together those of the strips with a single storyline. The third *Fireball XL5* strip introduced the alien life-form of the Astrans, small blue blobs on mini-flying saucers that appeared on and off in the strip throughout its run. As it appeared that Earth was to make peace with the Astrans, an assassin tried to kill the Kaplan, the Astrans' leader. Issue 19 (26th May 1965) saw the storyline transfer into *Lady Penelope*, with a one-off strip as her Ladyship tracked the assassin. This in Issue 22 (19th June 1965) it was Troy Tompson who finally captured the assassin in another one-off serial. Around the same time, Lady Penelope's second encounter with Mr Steelman took place in a Paris all but destroyed some weeks earlier by the Centrovans in the *Stingray* strip.

## SECRET AGENT MAN

Issue 21 (12th June 1965) saw the debut of *Special Agent 21*, a futuristic espionage strip concerning Brent Cleaver, Agent 21 of the Universal Secret Service (USSS), drawn by Rab Hazzim. Agent 21 not only appeared in this strip but also became the editor of the comic to give the publication a further unique identity. Readers of TV CENTURY 21 now automatically became members of the Junior Secret Service, a ploy that would be tried again after a relaunch at a later date. The creator and original artist on *Don Dare* himself (not to mention the beautiful biblical epic *The Road of Courage* and other EAGLE strips), Frank Hampson, greeted TV CENTURY 21 with his work for a *Fireball XL5* strip from Issue 40 (23rd October 1965), whereafter Noble resumed with Issue 44 (20th November 1965).

While TV COMIC offered a solitary holiday special each year, TV CENTURY 21 ignored no less than three extra issues during 1965. The first in May 1965 was the TV CENTURY 21 STINGRAY SPECIAL featuring strips about *Minera*, *Stingray* and a couple of 'funnies' about Oink the Seal from veteran comic artist George Paffen who had worked on CHILDREN'S OWN, MARVELMAN FAMILY and many others. The main strips were illustrated by either the soft tones of Ron Embellata or the bolder, machine-orientated style of Ron Turner. Turner had worked on a variety of titles in the late 1940s and early 1950s (including COMMANDO CRAIG) was best known for space age detective Rock Random in SUPER DETECTIVE LIBRARY, Space Age in LONE STAR MAGAZINE, Scoop



TV CENTURY 21: *The Daleks* (1965) - by Richard Jennings

Donovan in *FILM FUN* and *SPACE ACK* from 1960. The second special in July was *TV CENTURY 21 SUMMER EXTRA* for

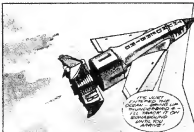


**TV CENTURY 21: The Daleks (1966)** - Colour artwork by Ron Turner

another *Nation* creation was introduced into the serial. The Mechanoids had been developed for the concluding episodes of *The Chase*, shown during May/June 1965. Already exploited for merchandise, these spherical robotic adversaries for the Daleks made their first attack on the Daleks by taking over one of the metal monsters on board a new Dalek space platform. Turner took over from Jessup mid-way through a storyline, and it is his bolder, more graphic artwork with its heavy use of shading and bright colours that is generally better remembered as appearing on the comic's back page.

## THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!

Rather than launch *Thunderbirds* into *TV CENTURY 21* concurrently with the TV series in September/October 1965, Fensell's team decided to wait until January 1966, by which time the show would be mid-way through its run and well established. Thus it was planned to bring in *International Rescue* on the comic's first anniversary. The comic had maintained a stable content for the first year, but new changes came with issue 51 (16b January 1966). Dropped were *Burke's Law* and *Supercar* (no longer widely re-run) whilst *Lady Penelope* was to be transferred to a comic of her own launched concurrently with the revamp. Lady P had already investigated 'Thunderbirds' in her own column (at the request of a figure writing from Malaysia who turned out to be The Hood) and a five-week countdown of colour photographs featuring the five fantastic *International Rescue* craft had been run. In the final instalment of her strip, Penelope had been contacted by Jeff Tracy who had a special proposition for her...



**TV CENTURY 21: Thunderbirds (1967)** - Colour artwork by Frank Bellamy

With issue 52 (15th January 1966), *Thunderbirds* blazed into action. The redesigned front cover showed Thunderbird 3 streaking into space with the headline **THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!** Relieved of duties on the *Lady Penelope* strip, Eden moved over to do a short stint on *The Daleks* from issue 52 to issue 58 (26th February 1966) before Turner returned to the strip. The biggest change by far was the shift of emphasis to the new comic strip *Thunderbirds*, initially written by Fensell, this was a three page strip painted by Frank Bellamy.



**TV CENTURY 21: Thunderbirds (1966)** - Colour artwork by Frank Bellamy

## FRANK BELLAMY

Frank Bellamy is a legend in the comic world, his work highly collected and his use of colour, shading and imaginative layout is the envy of many. Born in Kettering in 1917, Bellamy studied at a graphic school and became a commercial artist. In 1953 he started working on strips for *MINKEY MOUSE WEEKLY* such as *Monty Carstairs* and *The Living Desert*. The following year he moved to *SWIFT* (a companion to *EAGLE*) where he drew the strips of *Swiss Family Robinson*, *King Arthur* and his *Knights* and *Robin Hood* and his *Merry Men*. Graduating to *EAGLE* in 1957, Bellamy produced a biography of Winston Churchill entitled *The Happy Warrior*, followed by *The Shepherd King - The Story of David* and *The Travels of Marco Polo*. When Hulton Press was bought out by Odhams and Frank Hampson was relieved of work on *Don Dare*, Bellamy took over in Autumn 1959 and worked for a year alongside Don Harley. Unhappy with the studio method of working, Bellamy came off *Don Dare* and in 1960 started work on *Fraser of Africa*, followed by *Montgomery of Almain* and *Heros* (the *Spartan*, which ran to mid-1965). At this time, Bellamy was also contributing Brett Millon to *BOY'S OWN*.

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER

During his time on *SWIFT* and *EAGLE*, Bellamy had devised a style of work that was action-packed, breaking up conventional framing techniques, and whilst his depictions of the *Thunderbird* craft were not always faithful to the television version, the result was invariably dynamic in terms of both machines and figure work. Although all three pages were apparently painted in colour, only the centrespread was painted as such. The storyline picked up where the last instalment of *Lady Penelope* had left off, with Penelope arriving on Tracy Island as Jeff's guest for the first time and so joining *International Rescue*. Other new strips at this stage were *Get Smart* by the likes of Tibbo and Tom Kerr and *The Masters* by Trevillion.

A short *Stringray* serial was drawn by Ron Embleton's brother, Gerry, from issue 58 (26th February 1966), who later took over the strip for another serial from issue 82 after a storyline which has erroneously been credited to Don Harley, another graduate of *Don Dare*, although the style of art is close to Gerry Embleton's. Gerry's style of artwork made less use of colour blending than his brother's, tending to use shading to show form. The lesser known Embleton's career had taken in strips such as *Stringbow the Mighy* for *ZIP* and *Iron Man* for *BOY'S WORLD*.

Turner's return to *The Daleks* in issue 59 (5th March 1966) saw the continuation of the conflict between the Daleks and the Mechanoids in a



single eleven-issue storyline (often broken into two separate serials by comic chronologists). Whinniker's storylines included a serial about a Dalek which threatened human emotions, very akin to his 1967 television script *The Evil of the Daleks*. The Daleks' least of humanity and of Earth, and eventually captured an Earth space liner, the *Stamaker*. From its course co-ordinates, the Daleks were able to determine Earth's position, and the final instalment in Issue 104 (13th January 1967) saw the Daleks planning their strike against humanity - thus making it a prequel to either *The Dalek Book* or the 1964 television serial *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*.

TV CENTURY 21 produced two specials during 1966, the first being based on their flagship strip *THUNDERBIRDS EXTRA* in March. The strips were not drawn by Bellamy but instead came from Turner and Harley with Brian Lewis. Both Lewis and Harley would remain in the world of television adaptations for some time in their careers, with Harley maintaining strong links to *Thunderbirds* whilst Lewis developed a more caricatured and almost light comic style. At around this time, Lewis was doing *Space Ace* and *Moon Madman* in *SMASH!*, with his previous work including *Masses of Battle* for *EAGLE* and *John Brady* for *BOY'S WORLD*. Harley (known as the 'second best Dan Dare artist' after Hampson) had remained on *Dan Dare* longer than his mentor at the *EAGLE* studio, working with Bellamy and Keith Watson up to 1962. The second special was the more general TV CENTURY 21 SUMMER EXTRA issued in July.

From Issue 66 (23rd April 1966), the third *Thunderbirds* serial was reduced to just being the colour centrepiece, reducing the burden on Bellamy. Issue 74 (18th June 1966) saw the start of *The Investigator* by Harley concerning the escapades of two agents for Universal Engineering Incorporated who apparently manufactured the Fireball XL fleet and Firefish. Edna did the first of two brief visits filling in on Fireball XL3 with Issue 87 (10th September 1966), whilst *The Investigator* ended in Issue 89 (24th September 1966).

Another original strip to debut with Issue 90 (1st October 1966) was *Catch or Kill*, the comic work that Michael Stroud took over as artist on Stangay. *Catch or Kill* was set in 2066 and chronicled the adventures of an intergalactic hunter of big-game. For a few weeks towards the end of 1966, Bellamy took a break from *Thunderbirds*. The strip continued in the hands of Harley, affecting the last few instalments of a very long storyline. Harley's artwork was inferior to that of Bellamy throughout this time.

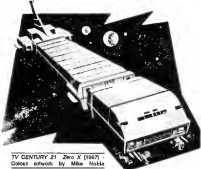
## THUNDERBIRDS IN THE MAIL

To coincide with the release of the cinema feature **THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO** in December 1966, Don Lawrence drew a twenty-three instalment daily adaptation of the movie for the **DAILY MAIL**, with the first of the fine and rare line instalments appearing on 5th December 1966.

## NOBLE PURSUITS

From Issue 101 (24th December 1966), a four issue photocopy adaptation of the movie **THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!** appeared in TV CENTURY 21, showcasing two pages of colour stills each week. The film had been released in December 1966 and interest in *THUNDERBIRDS* was at a peak. Bellamy resumed work on *Thunderbirds* with scripts now coming from Hooper and Scott Goodall. It was also clear with Issue 101 that Fireball XL3's day was almost over, as it lost its colour pages and Edna took over from Noble. With Issue 105 (21st January 1967), Steve Zodiac regained his colour and Noble, but was demoted to a single page on the back cover, replacing *The Daleks* (whose rights had been purchased by TV Publications for TV COMIC). Taking pride of place now with two colour pages was *Zero X*, a strip based around the stricken Martian vessel that had featured in *THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO*. Noble took this on alongside his work on Fireball XL3 with stories coming from Angus Allen and Goodall, and Gerry Embleton did a last fill-in story for Stangay.

Noble's return to Fireball XL3 was short lived (due to *Zero X*), and mid-way through a long storyline about a Boreonik missile attack, Don Lawrence took over the artwork chores from Issue 109 (18th February 1967). Lawrence was a respected artist, best known for his work on the strip *adventure The Trigon Empire* which showed a technologically advanced civilisation that resembled the empire of ancient Rome or Greece the strip starting in *RANGER* in 1965. His previous work included various *Pilots* westerns for *TV HEROS*, *MARVELMAN*, *CAPTAIN MIRACLE*, adaptations of the TV series *WELLS FARGO* and *PONY EXPRESS* for *ZIP* and *SWIFT*, *Sword of Excalibur* and *Hand of Zor* in *LION* from *Wrath of the Gods* for *BOY'S WORLD* and *EAGLE*. Lawrence's colourful and realistic artwork fitted in perfectly with the comic style, and made a worthy successor to Noble. Another shift around in artist came in Issue



TV CENTURY 21 *Zero X* (1967) - Colour artwork by Mike Noble

115 (1st April 1967) when Gerry Embleton moved over to *Catch or Kill*. March 1967 also saw the release of the final TV CENTURY 21 special: *THUNDERBIRDS TV CENTURY 21 SPRING EXTRA* with art from Harley, Lewis and Turner.

*Catch or Kill* ended in Issue 131 (22nd July 1967). With Issue 139 (18th September 1967), *Bikko* drawn by Kerr was transferred over from the defunct companion title *SOLO* (see later). The following week *Get Smart* made its last appearance in the comic. Around this time, another new 21st century strip was created: *Front Page* drawn by John Barnes, which followed newshounds across the world. On the artwork front, Noble was indisposed for a few weeks on *Zero X*, causing Edna to provide the pictures for four issues.

## THIS IS THE VOICE OF THE MYSTERONS...

The first indication that a new Century 21 series would be joining TV CENTURY 21 was around Issue 140 (23rd September 1967) when *Front Page* covered the return of Captain Black's ill-fated Mars expedition seen in the pilot episode of *CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS*. The following week, the first serial of *Captain Scarlet* and the *Mysterons* began as a two-page colour centrepiece, with stunning art from Ron Embleton who had painted the closing caption backgrounds for the TV series. Most regions started screening *CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS* at the end of September 1967, almost exactly concurrent with its debut in TV CENTURY 21, but the drawing power of Century 21's series was already waning, and some ITV regions held the show back until January 1968.



TV21 *Captain Scarlet* and the *Mysterons* (1968) - Colour artwork Mike Noble

With the advent of *Scarlet* in Issue 141 (8th September 1967), *Stangay* was demoted to black and white, and Fireball XL3's single page went monochrome from Issue 144 (21st October 1967) with first Kerr and then Colin Andrew drawing Zodiac and his friends. Andrew had also filled in on *Stangay* from Issue 146 (18th November 1967), before Stroud returned to the super sub strip. Andrew's previous work included westerns and war comics like *BUFFALO BILL CODY* and *BULLDOG BRITAIN* *COMMANDO*, *Captain Magnus* for *ZIP* and John Brady in *BOY'S WORLD*.

One strip which did not join TV CENTURY 21 in September 1967 was

**THE PRISONER**, the surreal spy series from ITC starring Patrick McGeehan as a nameless secret agent trapped in a picturesque hamlet known as 'the Village'. McGeehan's previous show, *Danger Man*, had been a great success, and in addition to a Mick Anglo one-shot had spawned test stories in *TV Express* during 1961 and more recently a comic strip drawn by Jesus Blasco for *LION AND CRIAMPION* during 1966. Fennell was sent some sample scripts of *THE PRISONER* for consideration, but decided that it was not truly in keeping with the style of the comic.

## TV21 IS GREEN

*TV21* Issue 155 (6th January 1968) saw a big shake-up as *Captain Scarlet* and the *Mysterons* became the cover feature (with the *Idon* newspaper concept abandoned), and now dominated four pages of the comic. Hamilton now provided a colour cover, two pages of black and white art and then concluded each installment with a fourth page in colour. *Secret Agent 21* was revamped so that Brent Cleaver now gained special powers and retired to become *Mr Magnet* from Issue 155, whilst *Biko* and *Front Page* had both ended in Issue 154. Issue 155 also saw *Zero X* placed in the hands of Jim Watson whilst *Fireball XLS* continued only in the form of a text story. *Stargay* too changed direction, with Troy Tempest wrongly accused of treason and becoming a hunted fugitive for the rest of the strip's life.

Hamilton left *Captain Scarlet* with Issue 157 (30th January 1967) and the strip was taken over by Noble, who had come off *Zero X* with Issue 154. The next few months were to see Noble, Harley and Keith Watson handle the chores of the *Spectrum* strip on an irregular basis. Keith Watson had come to *TV CENTURY 21* from *EAGLE* where he had drawn *Dan Dare* since 1962 after taking over from Harley (the publishers of *EAGLE* having decided to use reprints of old *Dan Dare* strips during 1966). Since then he had worked on *The Space Girls* for *TNA*.

Issue 162 (24th February 1968) saw various changes to the magazine, notably that the pages were now an inch or so shorter. Colour was reduced by one page, and then by a further page from Issue 181 (6th July 1968). From Issue 177 (8th June 1968), *Stargay* was helmed by Jon Davis (who had worked on *Agent 21* and in *Lady Penelope*), and would conclude in Issue 189 (31st August 1968). *Fireball XLS* had already been retired with Issue 167 (30th March 1968). Issue 185 (3rd August 1968) was one of the first issues to have Bellamy drawing the colour *Captain Scarlet* cover, in addition to his usual chores on *Thunderbirds*, with the interior pages (all three of which were now in black and white) by Harley or Jim Watson.

For the last couple of issues of *TV21*, other strips heralded the changes that were around the corner. Two popular TV series - *Tarzan* and *The Saint* - found their way in amongst the fantastic strips. Both were strips that had previously appeared in the sister publication *TV TORNADO* (see later). Issue 192 was dated 21st September 1968, but the title on the cover was not *TV21*. Instead the banner read *TV21 AND TV TORNADO*. The Anderson related strips to survive the merger were *Captain Scarlet* and the *Mysterons*, *Zero X* and *Thunderbirds*, and from then on it was downhill all the way.

## TORNADO DAMAGE

*Captain Scarlet* (as the strip was now retitled) continued as a colour cover and three black-and-white pages inside the comic. Noble's principle work was the continuing adventures of *Zero X* which maintained its two colour pages (not to mention the best storylines), whilst Bellamy continued to provide the steaming colour material for *Thunderbirds*. Brent Cleaver underwent another revamp to become *Agent 21*, still drawn by Hamilton. *The Saint* and *Tarzan* did not fit in happily with the format of a twenty-first century comic, and some complaints from various 'shades' (the junior members of *Spectrum*) began towards the end of the year. The production team had also changed with Chris Spencer taking over from Fennell and Richard O'Neill inheriting Angus Allan's post as script editor on *TV21 AND TV TORNADO* and *LADY PENELOPE*.

From Issue 218 (22nd March 1969), *Captain Scarlet* himself was demoted from the cover to occupy those black-and-white interior pages drawn by Jim Watson or John Cooper. The same revamp saw the introduction of *Department S*, with Vicente Alcazar and Carlos Pino producing a series of black-and-white adventures concerning the Interpol department. It was also Alcazar and Pino who took over *The Saint*, *Thunderbirds* and *Zero X* solidified on as the last bastions of quality TV SF. *Project SWORD*, a strip from *TV TORNADO*, had also been given a second lease of life in *TV21 AND TV TORNADO* as a series of text stories. Football seemed to be the latest craze and a firm favourite with boys reading *TV21*, so increasingly more material was devoted to this sport - and even *Scarlet* himself had played football towards the end of 1968. In Issue 231 (21st June 1969), a new strip called *Superleague* drawn by Malcolm Stokes started up in an attempt to balance the SF and football demands with tales of a Manchester football team from the twenty-first century.

*TV21* was on its last legs through the summer of 1969, and although the artwork of Noble and Bellamy was as sharp as ever, even the *Mysterons* had finally been defeated by the use of comic rays, leaving *Spectrum* to effectively act as a world police and emergency service in the *Captain Scarlet* strip, which had shrunk to two pages only since Issue 230 (14th June 1969). With Fennell's influence long gone and internal politics causing problems at Century 21 Publishing, it was decided to merge the ailing *TV21* with the generally unpopular companion title *JOE 99 TOP SECRET* and relaunch the whole venture as a new magazine from Issue 1 again.

## AT THE MOVIES

Also around at the end of 1966 was *Dy Who and the Quicks*, a US comic from Dell which was an adaptation by Dick Giordano and Bal Trapani of the 1965 *Auru* movie that had failed to set America alight in eagerness for further Dalek material. Whilst the colour art (based closely on certain publicity photographs) seems quite poor now, for the time it was most acceptable for an American one-shot.



## ELEGANCE ... CHARM ... AND DEADLY DANGER

With *TV CENTURY 21* a great success a companion title for girls was launched at the start of 1966. This was *LADY PENELOPE*, with her Ladyship and Parker moving out of the pages of *TV CENTURY 21* and gaining a quality comic of their own (with the same larger format and eight pages of photogravure colour). Also edited by Fennell, Issue 1 (22nd January 1966) contained the adventures of Penelope in a two page strip of *Lady Penelope: Elegance ... Charm ... and Deadly Danger* painted stylishly in full colour by Frank Langford. The stories were of a similar vein to the *Idon* ones with plenty of espionage scrapes with Bernstein and the return of Mr Steelman and his robotic creations. With the stories set after Penelope's introduction



*LADY PENELOPE*: Lady Penelope (1966) - Colour artwork by Frank Langford

the necks of International Rescue, so could now call on extra help when needed, hence Scott Tracy and Thunderbolt 1 blasted their way into Issue 40 (22nd October 1966) to prevent a terrorist scheme to destroy Unity City - just when THUNDERBIRDS was returning for Season Two on TV. Issue 44 (19th November 1966) saw Penelope visiting the studios of Century 21 Films and meeting the owner Mr Anderhill, as well as seeing Jenny Bondage (from the episode *The Man from M.I.5*). A week later, actor Paul Carson sported a puffed and zipped uniform, not unlike those worn by Spectrum personnel the following year.



**LADY PENELOPE** *Lady Penelope* (1968) - Colour artwork Frank Langford

Parker spawned his own one page 'funny' strip, *Perils of Parker: Glamour... Arrogance... and Safe as Houses!* in black and white drawn by Peter Ford. Towards the end of the year, a three issue adaptation of the feature film *THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO* was run in the comic, told from Penelope's point of view and illustrated by black-and-white photographs. Penelope would also take a personal interest in a variety of the more general text stories.

*LADY PENELOPE* continued for more self-contained serials during its run, many of which were not TV related but founded on the staple diet of battles, series, battleships and the like which was aimed to appeal to young ladies. However, amongst its pages in Issue 1 could be found Trevillion's *The Beverly Hillsbillies*, Ticonobe's *Bewitched*, John Burns' *Space Family Robinson* (nothing to do with the fact that we can't get rights to *LOST IN SPACE* hence!) and the excellent two pages colour strip based on *The Man from UNCLE* later painted by Ron Embleton and various Latin artists. The only other British telefantasy strip was *Marina - Girl of the Sea*, a colour strip on the back cover, initially painted by Rab Hamilton. This was another prequel to events chronicled in *STINGRAY*, with the first very long storyline set at a time when Marina and her father Aphony could still talk, prior to a curse placed upon them by Titus, obeying the will of the fish god Toulid. Never explained fully in the series (but featured on the Century 21 album *Marina Speaks*), if Marina or Aphony ever spoke again, one of their people from the city of Pacific would die. Thus the two were condemned to silence, communicating by thought transference. The adventures of the naive amphibians continued to catalogue encounters with other underwater races and monsters plus further skirmishes with Titus.



**LADY PENELOPE** *Perils of Parker* (1968) - BW artwork by Peter Ford

## NEW YEAR, NEW PENELOPE

*LADY PENELOPE* underwent a relaunch and emerged as *THE NEW LADY PENELOPE* with Issue 55 (21st January 1967). The basic format was still the same with *Lady Penelope, Marina - Girl of the Sea* and *Perils of Parker*, and nearly all the ongoing serials starting new storylines. Marina now focused herself brought inside the comic's bright covers and rendered as a black and white one page affair by a different artist. Langford continued to produce two colour pages of *Lady P* herself, with Burns filling in for him and John Booth joining the writing team. The Beverly Hillsbillies was revived as was *Space Family Robinson*, and *The Man from UNCLE* was replaced by the more fitting *The Girl from UNCLE* which now took up Hamilton's time. *The Monkeys* also survived the format change, with Harry Lindfield (who drew *Mark Question for EAGLE*) taking over from Tom Kerr. Dukken and Ticonobe's *What Did That Dog Say?* were introduced at this point.

Two of the new strips though did have British telefantasy connections. The issuer of the two was a two page black and white hospital strip referred to as *Gerry Anderson's Craghlan Ward*. In the first instalment, *Lady Penelope* and Parker made appearances to launch the new format. Seeing a boy knocked off his bike by a van driver, Penelope and Parker rushed the unfortunate lad to the local hospital in FAB 1 and discovered there was no children's ward. Penelope agreed to fund a new ward named after her that offered a few years of turning drama - although set more in 1967 than the twenty-first century.

The second strip was the back cover replacement for *Marina*, a one page colour strip drawn with a simplistic but effective style by Joe Davis about five expert girl pilots mysteriously brought together to undertake secret missions in white fighter planes as *The Angels*. The artwork was colourful and dynamic, more akin to *TV CENTURY 21* than *LADY PENELOPE*, and at this point there was no mention of Spectrum, Captain Scarlet or The Mysterons, was eight months away from their TV debut.



**LADY PENELOPE** *Marina - Girl of the Sea* (1967) - Colour artwork by Rab Hamilton

The format of *THE NEW LADY PENELOPE* was established, and from Issue 63 (1st April 1967) the title reverted back to just *LADY PENELOPE* with little change to the contents. *Strand* and Burns continued to fill in for Langford with his two page colour strip on Penelope herself, which included a guest appearance by Steve Zodiac of *FIREBALL XL5* in Issue 76 (1st July 1967). *Perils of Parker* was rotated over the summer of 1967, although it seemed popular demand recalled him for bulging one page features up to the end of the year. With the ever increasing build up to *CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS*, the Angels took a more prominent place in coverage and in Issue 84 (26th August 1967), the two girls met their so far secret and nameless employer: Colonel White of Spectrum. After being put through their paces in Asia, the girls were ready to join Spectrum properly, and adventures now shifted from the secret Angels airbase to the hovering platform of Cloudbase with appearances from other characters in the TV series. Whilst things were looking up for *The Angels*, Marina had reached the end of the road as *STINGRAY* returns faded from the nation's screens. The final four episode storyline saw Marina being captured by Titus, and used in a plan to destroy Stingray. The strip concluded in Issue 89 (30th September 1967) with Marina befriending Troy Tempest in what was now an adaptation of the first episode *The Pilot*.

*LADY PENELOPE* soldiered on into 1968 with a few changes in the line-up during January. As of Issue 103 (6th January 1968), *The Angels* was expanded to two pages and taken inside the comic, with Davis now providing one colour and one black and white page each week. Over the early months of the year, the girls had a couple of tangles with Captain Black in the well drawn and plotted strip. New strips introduced at this point included the Alpine espionage school for young ladies at *Class Six Stenford* drawn by Hamilton, *Strand's Crossroads* and Kerr's strip about *The Spectrum*, the manufactured pop group who sang the closing credits to *CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS* and who were being hyped (intently unsuccessfully) as the new pop phenomenon to replace *The Monkees*.



TV CENTURY 21 SUMMER EXTRA: *Lady Penelope* (1968). Frank Hampton

Langford's first strip of the year introduced FAB 3 into the life of *Leady Penelope*, with this in fact being her show jumping horse. From Issue 180 (24th February 1968), the format of the comic changed again, and Langford's full colour work was now printed on one page of colour and another of black and white, with Mr Sieelman and his robots making a final appearance. John Cooper filled in for a storyline before the strip returned to full colour for Langford's return. Parker's ride was now an uncertain one, since after missing Issue 163 he found *Peck of Pooker* relegated to the status of illustrated text story. By Issue 181 (2nd March 1968), Parker was appearing purely in the *Leady Penelope* strip for the final weeks of his comic career.



LADY PENELOPE The Angels (1967) - Colour artwork by Jan Daver

### YOUNG LADY PENELOPE

With the departure of Alan Fennell from Century 21's publishing arm, there was a notable decline in standards for the Anderson related comics. The principal vehicle was *LADY PENELOPE*, which underwent another overhaul to emerge as *PENELOPE* with issue 123 (25th May 1968). The Angel had returned to Cloudbase for the last time in issue 120 (4th May 1968), by which time they had been reduced to monochrome status. Parker and Penelope were now the last Anderson elements in a comic which was clearly trying to break away from its TV identity into the realm of girls' adventures. Another huge step was taken in issue 127 (22nd June 1968) as the title of the main strip changed from *LADY PENELOPE* to *PENELOPE* so that the readership could enjoy stories of 'Lady Penelope when she was girl'. In the year 2040, nine year old Penelope (or Penny as she would soon become known) was sent home from India to Creighton Ward Mansion by her father to recover after an illness. Langford continued as the main artist delivering a colour front cover and two black and white interior pages as young Penny and her stern governess Miss Feather indulged in all manner of typical low-key adventures around the estate (without any sign of Parker). Stand took over the strip for one issue, relegated to two pages of monochrome artwork, before Langford returned on an irregular basis. Although the finalist plot from Bennett roared their heads, there was little to connect the nine year old girl with the cool secret agent of *THUNDERBIRDS*. All the familiar strips from the early days of the comic had vanished, replaced by new ones including *Dan*

**Dee, Dory, Beaky, Mick and Titch.** As the year drew to a close, young Lady Penelope was to undergo another fateful change. As a result of various misadventures preceding her father's return to England, Lord Creighton Ward decided that it was time for Penny to go to school - becoming a boarder at Highswater School in Dewes with Issue 153 (21st December 1968). Langford's art solidified on into true fluid Elythia territory of beauty girls in the dome, Penny being sent to Cowesby, nearly expelled... but winning through by scoring the vital point in a school netball match. Hurrah!

1969 saw the death throes of *PENELOPE*. Although Langford's art was still a delight, the jocular hi-jinks at Highswaters didn't compel to adventure in the twenty-first century by any means, and a unxy donkey wandering onto the railway line on a sunny night, compared to a Berzinsk missile attack on Uxley City, no longer mentioned, and indeed the whole Highswaters was very firmly rooted in 1969, despite the original 2040. Another serial which started in issue 165 (15th March) goes to a two page black and white strip, but also featured *Class Six Stomach*, with an apparent kidnapping in part of a test to see if Penny had what it took to become her father. After that, it was back to Highswaters, with a nod from issue 190 (6th September 1969) for which the end of the comic was also reconfirmed to the strip. By the end of the schoolroos serials were wearing thin, and change was

Penry's seventeenth birthday arrived suddenly and unexpectedly in June 1985 (11th October 1969) and meant that she was new to lower Highdown and search for a new format - with Langford doing a colour page and a black and white page of art each week. Penry was met at the station by her father's chauffeur Parker in FABI 3, totally contradicting their initial meeting way back in TV CENTURY 22. FABI 1 was the only element to even vaguely suggest this was 2009 and not 1969, and appeared with its driver in that single issue. During Issue 190, Penry found Coughlin Ward Mansion to be a boring place and set off in search of another format. The theft of her suitcase led her to London and Silver Street Market where she made many groovy and fish new friends at a junk stall. With the carefree abandon of the Starline, Penry moved into Silver Street Market and uncovered a gang of crooks, then going on to fight evil nasty propeller developers intent on flattening the Market. It was during this vibrant campaign that the cancellation order unexpectedly appeared, and with Issue 204 (13th December 1969) the comic ended. Penry - who now had no connection at all to the husky voiced beauty in the pink Rolls Royce - drifted into comic legend after a major role in *PRINCESS ZINA*, giving birth to *PRINCESS ZINA* and *PENELLOPE*.



**ENVELOPE** Lady Paradise (1998) - Blu artwork by Frank Langford

### METAMORPHOSIS OF A LADY

**PRINCESS TINA AND PENELOPE** continued to chronicle the adventures of the girl next door, as Mary Ward in her swinging London of 1970 in which she was known as Penny, with Langford still producing two pages of black-and-white art each week for the strip *Penny on her Own*. **PENELOPE** was absorbed finally as the title reverted to **PRINCESS TINA** on 6th June 1970 and Lady Penelope Creighton-Ward - as she had once been known - ended her first comic strip life a few issues later on 19th September 1970.

TV TORNADO was a title launched by City Magazines Ltd. in association with World Distributors in Manchester, with a first issue cover date of 14th January 1967. Unlike its cousins of *LADY PENELOPE* and *TV CENTURY 21*, it was a very basic affair and, like *TV COMIC*, mixed truly TV related items with syndicated strips, usually from America. The initial line-up featured strips covering *BONANZA* and *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA* drawn by editor Mick Anglo, then stories on *THE MAN FROM UNCLE* and cartoon characters *Baron* and *Superman* who just happened to be on TV as well. The strips switched around during the earlier months, establishing strips based on ITV's series of *THE SAINT* and the television version of *TARZAN* (both drawn by Harry Shepp), plus text stories devoted to *THE INVADERS* and *THE GREEN HORNET*.

Television coverage also took the form of short articles mostly concerning *THE SAINT*. Each week had a photogravure colour cover painting of a famous television face, although often nothing would appear inside the issue concerning the star, apart from a small photograph. The British telefantasy contest arrived with Issue 36 (16th September 1967), the week before City Magazines merged one of their other young comics, *SOLO*, into *TV TORNADO* making it *TV TORNADO AND SOLO*. A photogravure cover of the Mystron complex on Mars proclaimed 'The Mystrons Are Here!', and inside was the first three page instalment of the new comic strip, *The Mystrons*.

## SOLO SPOT

Another new comic from City Magazines was *SOLO* which debuted with its first issue dated 18th February 1967. Although the comic was edited by Fennell, Chris Spencer and John Eblewhite as a co-production with Century 21 Publishing, there was little or no Anderson content in the early issues. Principle content were strips based on *THE MAN FROM UNCLE* by Trevillion, the comic's title hailing from that show's hero, Napoleon Solo (the strip having moved over from *LADY PENELOPE*). *SOLO* also featured the comic adventures of Sgt. Bilko (from *THE PHIL SILVERS SHOW*) by Kerr. The rest of the material came from Gold Key reprints of Walt Disney strips.

Things changed for *SOLO* with Issue 18 (17th June 1967) which had the headline 'Was This Air Crash Caused by the Mystrons?'. Since nobody at that time had heard of the Mystrons, it was up to Senior Editor Alan L. Fennell to warn readers of this threat from space in a feature called 'We

To help promote the release of Hammer's version of *QUATERMASS AND THE PIT* in September 1967, a highly condensed five part comic adaptation of Nigel Kneale's screenplay (itself based on the 1958/9 BBC television serial) was produced for syndication in newspapers. It is not known if the strip ever actually appeared, but the five instalments (entitled *The Fossil, Marha's Contact, Planet and Human Sacrifice*) were indeed completed - apparently by artist Brian Lewis. Based closely on publicity shots, each item contained four or five images and a lot of text to rapidly convey the complex storyline.



Space World Organisation for Research and Development which would promote a range of spacecraft vehicles marketed by Century 21 (created and written by Keith Shackleton purely as a merchandising venture). The middle four pages were now devoted to the Mystron threat. First came 'Spectrum News', a fake newspaper in the style of *TV CENTURY 21* in which reporter John Marsh mentioned Mystron activity. Next came a two page comic strip, *The Mark of the Mystron*, to be read off by readers' reports on the *AMO Page* (Anti-Mystron Organisation).

*The Mark of the Mystron* was a two page black and white strip apparently drawn by Don Harley, and set in 1967 - over a hundred years prior to the Mystrons' main onslaught on Earth during *CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTRONS*. In the storyline (all of which were two parts long), reporter John Marsh would investigate reports of Mystron activity. The comic continued to push the Mystron reveal in Issue 24 (29th July 1967) that the Mystron format was 'Based on Gerry Anderson's forthcoming TV Series, *CAPTAIN SCARLET*'.

After only a few months, *SOLO* was merged with *TV TORNADO*. In a move that was common with merging titles, for the week prior to the merger, both comic carried the same comic strips to introduce the readers to new storylines. In Issue 31 of *SOLO* (16th September 1967), *Project SWORD* was hurriedly concluded in a text story, *The Star* from *TV TORNADO* rerun up, and *The Mark of the Mystron* was replaced by the revamped strip *The Mystrons*.

## MYSTRON MENACE

Making its debut a couple of weeks prior to *CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTRONS*, *The Mystrons* opened with the scenes of the Mystrons' complex on Mars being attacked by an MEV from Earth, in accordance with the pilot episode of the new Anderson series. However, whilst the Mystrons urged their war of nerves against Earth on the nation's screens, the Mystrons also set about conquering other planets to form an empire. By exploding and ransacking one of their buildings they formed a space complex, which was then transported across space under the direction of the Mystron computer on Mars. Space complexes were then given targets to conquer, the first being Andromeda in Andromeda. On the world of living trees, the Mystrons reconstructed matter into the ancient shapes which they had abandoned centuries earlier, a multi-faceted body composed of hexagonal panels, three of which bore sinister eye-dials that house ray weapons.

To all intents and purposes, the strip (which was three black and white pages each week) was unremarkable, only loosely connected with the television series it originated from and bore more than a passing resemblance to *The Daleks* strip from *TV CENTURY 21*. As the Mystrons sent space complexes to new planets, sometimes they conquered and sometimes they were destroyed by the natives. The third storyline set on the planet Astartes saw a human expedition which had arrived in the MEV part of a Zero X craft, and the Zero X (featured heavily in Issue 45 (9th December 1967) in which the Mystrons planned an attack on Earth. Continuity to *TV CENTURY 21* was maintained in part when some of the strips were set on Mars and references were made to the Rock Snake Hills and the capital Kabas set up by humanity. A particularly dark storyline concerned a three man crew being wiped out after being kidnapped by the Mystron master computer, and a further serial concerned an ancient Mystron being found on the planet Boreas. The serial on early instalments may have been Tom Kerr, although later on it would seem that Harley's smooth tones and designs took over.



*SOLO* The Mark of the Mystron (1967) - B/w artwork by Don Harley

Are Not Alone'. Accompanied by photographs from *THUNDERBIRDS* and the forthcoming *CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTRONS*, evidence of Mystron activity from 1963 up to 1967 was shown. The authorities apparently rejected this evidence, so it was left up to *SOLO* to carry on the fight alone. Readers were urged to report Mystron activity in their area to the comic, with a page of such incidents printed in mini-column format concerning various disasters.

From Issue 19, *SOLO* was heavily revamped and bore the secondary banner of *Anti-Mystron Edition*. A three page strip called *Project SWORD* began, these being space adventures of the



TV TORNADO: The Mysterons (1967) - B/W artwork possibly by Tom Kerr

The TV TORNADO strips related to CAPTAIN SCARLET and THE MYSTERONS vanished after Issue 58 (17th February 1968). Coverage of other British telefantasy shows continued with covers and articles. Covers included THE PRISONER, DOCTOR WHO and THE AVENGERS, whilst Issues 56 and 58 respectively contained photofeatures on DOCTOR WHO and THE AVENGERS.

## DANGER IN THE NURSERY

As mainstream Anderson based comics were launched and relaunched, a new TV fantasy comic was being launched by City Magazine and Century 21 Publishing. CANDY was a bright and colourful landscape photograph publication which appeared week ending 21st January 1967. The title characters featured in the main photograph were Candy and Andy, two dolls who came to life in a magic toy shop - the idea being that if the comic proved popular, the props could feature in a television series. Elements taken directly from ATV television included Topo Gigio from SUNDAY NIGHT AT THE LONDON PALMADUM and Aunty Jean Morton and Tingha and Tucker (the two little bears) who appeared in the evangelical TREE HOUSE CLUB. The most popular strip in the first twenty-two issues was *Thunderbirds*, a four panel/one page item in which almost anthropomorphised versions of the International Rescue craft help out in a variety of situations. In the first issue, *Thunderbird 2* is flying past when a ginger cat gets stuck up a tree, and rescues the poor animal. In coming weeks, International Rescue needed Mr Pickle's roundabout, took a family disappointed by a closed zoo to Africa, had Firefly dig a field for a farmer, rescued a toy that had fallen in the water and located the Mole to dig a dog out of a rabbit hole. The final appearance of *Thunderbirds* was actually just a page to colour, although the same issue boasted pictures of Candy and Andy standing in front of photographs of Lady Penelope and FAB 1 - a play repeated in Issue 24 (31 July 1967) when the two dolls walked to visit Tracy Island. Initially edited by Fennell, the comic suffered by debuting a few months after TV *TOYLAND* and *JUPPIN*, both of which brought TV characters to the toy. Candy and Andy never got their TV series, and after three years the comic merged into IFC's *JACK AND JILL*.

## SHHHHHH... YOU KNOW WHO

Gerry and Sylvia Anderson's latest series, JOE 90, had made its debut on TV during September 1968. However by this time the selling power of Supermarionation was weakening, and several of the major ITV regions were not interested - already swamped with other Anderson products. Backed up with a moderate merchandise campaign targeted specifically at the same young audience as its child hero, JOE 90 was honoured in being given a corner of its own as opposed to turning up in another TV21 revamp. JOE 90 TOP SECRET made its debut with Issue 1 dated 18th January 1969.

JOE 90 TOP SECRET was a similar mix to TV21 but inferior in nearly every respect. The artwork was generally not as good, the articles rather too general and the overall production a mere shadow of the parent comic. Joe 90 itself was an individual story each week, and in the bulk of the early issues ran to four pages. The first page was a colour cover painting which set up a teaser for the super-intelligent child hero, whereas the case was solved on behalf of WIN across three black-and-white interior pages. Art chores were shared between the bold graphic work of Keith Watson, and the less characterful work of Martin Ashbury, with John Cooper painting some of the covers in between chores on TV21 AND TV TORNADO. Ashbury had worked in an animation studio before becoming an assistant to Dan Barry in America working on *Flash Gordon*. Returning to England he worked for Hallmark Cards and became a freelance strip illustrator in 1968.

The Joe 90 storylines were very faithful to the spirit of the series - in fact far too faithful! Most of the arguments that WIN's next special agent was sent on bare very close resemblance to TV episodes. In *Sabotege!*, Joe



JOE 90 TOP SECRET: Joe 90 (1968) - B/W artwork by Martin Ashbury

had to locate a saboteur's bomb as in *Trial at Sea*; in another story Joe stood in for an Eastern prince as in *King for a Day*; *Cardiac Cones Home* was set a million miles away from the bodyguard episode of *Viva Cordova*; *Break Out* has an extremely similar plot to the episode *Breakout*; Issue 30 saw a guinea-pig storyline in which Joe infiltrated a hideout in a similar manner to Hi-jacked whilst the story in Issue 24 was almost identical to the transmitted episode *Splashdown*. Issues 17 and 18 (10th and 17th May 1969) did not carry a Joe 90 strip, replacing it with a competition in which the winner could become Joe 90 for a week and visited the set of the Anderson's new series U.F.O. A free gift of a cardboard model of Mac's Jet Car was given away free in Issue 1.

## LAW, ORDER AND JUSTICE

The other British telefantasy strip in JOE 90 TOP SECRET was *The Champions*, based on the ITC film series that covered the adventures of three intelligence operatives who had super powers. THE CHAMPIONS had made its debut on most regions around the same time as JOE 90 (although Thames Television in London decided not to screen it until November 1968). Like Joe 90, the strip was generally a three-page self-contained adventure each week, with black-and-white artwork from Jon Davis. While the layout was quite pleasing, Davis only caught a passing likeness of the four main characters - Craig Stirling, Richard Barrett, Sharon Macready and their boss, Tremayne. Like the TV series, the fantasy elements were frequently all too few, but the adventures (which tended to start in the middle of the story) were very capable for a mere three-page item. The initial storyline was written by Fennell, as were most first issues of each new Century 21 title.

The other three strips in the comic were *Misadventure + Temptation = Sport* (sports adventures with two Eskimo boys), *Star Trek* and *Land of the Giants*. *Star Trek* drew initially by Jim Blake and then by Harry F.



JOE 90 TOP SECRET: Joe 90 (1968) - B/W artwork by Jon Davis

Life itself, appeared some six months advance of the BBC screening the series itself. LAND OF THE GIANTS had been on air since December 1968 and was presented in dynamic colour by Gerry Haylock's artwork (Haylock had worked on *Knight of the Road* for EAGLE). Jim Burke, a native of the Orkney Islands, began work on girl's romance titles as a freelancer in 1966 and also illustrated record sleeves for rock bands.

As it turned out, JOE 90 was not the bit ITC had hoped for, and Century 21 Publishing were soon aware that the new comic's sales were not healthy. A proposed newspaper strip drawn by Don Lawrence had six initial instalments prepared, but nobody was interested in purchasing the rights. As for JOE 99 TOP SECRET, after a few months its absorption into the original Century 21 comic seemed inevitable.

## END OF AN ERA

Printing disputes delayed the publication of TV21 AND JOE 90 by two weeks - explaining why some issues in the dated 13th and others 27th September 1969 (the latter ones having a black bar to obscure the erroneous date). The comics were now on inferior paper and had far less colour. Continuing from TV21 were *Thunderbirds* by Bellamy, *The Saint* by Alexander/Win and *Tarzan* by Don Lawrence. The elements surviving from JOE 99 TOP SECRET were JOE 90 now drawn by Strand, *Star Trek* by Lindfield and *Land of the Giants* by Haylock. Although ended on the first thirty-four issues, Century 21 Publishing Ltd had actually ceased to exist during June 1969, and the comic was assembled by Marmalade.

Bellamy's *Thunderbirds* strip saw a reintroduction of the characters and format in the new page colour strip of Issue 1, followed by three issues with one page colour and one black-and-white. After this, Bellamy left the comic and moved over to *Gervis* in the *Daily Mirror*, and the two pages were taken over by John Cooper. JOE 90 continued with multi-part serials that were not of the same standard as these in its own comic. Football played an even greater part of the comic's new look.

TV21 AND JOE 90 shed all its Anderson related content during 1970. The comic decreased in dimensions from Issue 26 (21st March 1970) onwards, and the colour photographic covers were generally replaced by artwork. JOE 90 made his final appearance in Issue 36 (30th May 1970), after which the title changed to TV21. Two issues later, *Thunderbirds* ended its run and TV21 carried on as an Anderson-less comic from City Magazines Ltd. *Star Trek* continued in a healthy fashion, drawn in succession by Noble, Tamer and Pao. For the record, News International sold off City Magazines in July 1971, and the title continued as a publication from IPC. The content was now generally a mixture of Marvel comic reprints and boy's strips. At Issue 105 of the new series (25th September 1971), TV21 merged into VALIANT with only *Star Trek* still surviving, and drawn for a couple of years by John Stokes.

## AVENGERS, DALEKS AND VICTORIAN GENTLEMEN

Meanwhile back at the ranch - TV COMIC had a minor relaunch with Issue 684 (23rd January 1965 - the week TV CENTURY 21 debuted). As an enticement not to defect to City Magazines along with Mike Mercury and Steve Zeddie, a booklet was offered in which colour photographs of TV stars, which came free with the next few issues, could be collected. William Hartnell, in a shot from Marco Polo was to be found in Issue 684, and indeed Doctor Who was fast becoming an extremely popular strip, although the good Doctor's adventures were generally inferior to those of his adversaries, the Daleks, which could boast full colour.

Doctor Who moved closer to its TV counterpart when an agreement was reached to use a monitor from the series in early 1965. It was hoped that the giant insect Zarbi, created by Bill Strutton for the serial *The Web Planet*, would be as popular as the Daleks, and indeed readers were promised that the Zarbies (sic) would be coming soon as early as Issue 689 (27th February 1965), three weeks into the story's run on TV. The strip *On the Web Planet* - the first to bear a subtitle - featured both the Zarbi and the Monoplane and also referred to Doctor Who's previous visit to the planet Vortis.

Doctor Who and Space Patrol both appeared in TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL issued in June 1965. Whilst the latter was reaching the end of its commercial life, the former had reached a peak in popularity which would take it many years to recapture. One of Man's most interesting storylines that began in Issue 713 (14th August 1965) was a very basic story concerning the arrest of Doctor Who, John and Gillian in an Eastern bloc country, but was told in reverse with time flowing backwards around the TARDIS crew. When *Space Patrol* ended it ran, it was replaced by Doctor Who, which now appeared in the colour contemporary and was drawn in a more realistic and detailed manner by Bill Mevin. Having left Doctor Who, Man went on to draw Basil Brush for many years. The general rediffusion in Issue 720 (2nd October 1965) also saw the introduction of *The Avengers*, replacing the two black-and-white pages vacated by the BBC time traveller.



TV COMIC: Doctor Who (1966) - Black and white artwork by John Canning

*The Avengers* was drawn by Pat Williams, who depicted the exotic escapades of John Steed and his new companion Mrs Emma Peel (played by Diana Rigg), starting on exactly the same day that the first filmed episode - *The Town of No Return* - was partially networked by its producers, ABC. Based on a few publicity stills (notably with Mrs Peel in her *The Town of No Return* garb for the first storyline), the artwork was basic but acceptable, and the stories of a generally higher and more serious calibre than *Doctor Who*. Generally the plots were espionage affairs regarding new inventions and secret plans, but used offbeat settings in a similar manner to the video-taped days of the TV show. The first strip of any real note began (very abruptly) in Issue 731 (18th December 1965) and was a surreal affair about a madman called Count Vero who was threatening to destroy London with fire-breathing flying saucers and an army of robots - two of which Steed and Mrs Peel hide in to escape his clutches. Unlike the TV series, the avenging duo had a regular home in the form of 'the Colosseum', who turned up in several stories during the twelve month run.

## THE YOUNG AVENGERS

Whilst Pat Williams had the adult versions of THE AVENGERS slugging it out in TV COMIC, a young version of the show's heroine also showed up in a different form in another comic. JUNE, a girl's title published by Fleetway, ran a strip called *The Growing-Up of Emma Peel* from Issue 52 (28th January 1966), but unfortunately nothing more is known about this short-lived strip or its links to the successful ABC thriller series.

## DIZZY, DIZZY DOCTOR

Under Mevin, Doctor Who became increasingly whimsical. Doctor Who and his grandchildren landed on a hitherto unseen planet to encounter small frog people, and later in the same storyline had a brief meeting with the Ancient Mariner who wanted to use the TARDIS as a bus to hang his washing from. It was in this serial that Doctor Who's bag was introduced, a useful accessory from which the hero could conveniently produce whatever was needed to avert that week's peril.

TV COMIC's attempts to reach a readership against the new titles from City came in the form of its usual TV stars photographic album which came free with Issue 736 (22nd January 1966) and also included colour



TV COMIC: The Avengers (1966) - Black and white artwork by Pat Williams

shots of Macnee and Rigg. The averaging duo were joined by a colour shot of Hartnell from *The Crusades* two weeks later.

From Issue 748 (16th April 1966), the two pages of colour *Doctor Who* was taken over by John Canning. Originally a commercial artist and then an illustrator on *Women's* magazines, Canning went freelance in 1948 and started a career that took in *JUNIOR EXPRESS* plus work on *SWIFT*. Since 1956 he had been associated with TV COMIC, most recently handling the back page advertising strips on the publication such as *The Milky Bar Kid* and *The Sign of Secret Ladybird*. Moving moved on from *Doctor Who* to *PIPPI*, TV Publications' new comic for younger children where he would provide the artwork on *The Poglar* and then worked on *Happy Families* for Whizzer & Chips in the 1970s/80s.



TV COMIC *Doctor Who* and the Daleks (1967) - Artwork by John Canning

Canning's artwork was more sketchy than Mevin's, and took *Doctor Who* away from the more whimsical scenarios. In Canning's first serial, some new returning robotic foes were introduced in the form of the Treds, creations which were not a million miles away from Ray Casick's visualisation of the Daleks (for which TV Publications could not obtain the rights). *The Avengers* and *Doctor Who* both tared up in Jane's TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL. With Issue 763 (30th July 1966), there was another reshuffle in TV COMIC. Orlando drawn by John McLusky was now given the colour pages, with *Doctor Who* demoted to black-and-white. This displaced *The Avengers*, which continued as a single page strip only and ended its first run in TV COMIC with Issue 771 (24th September 1966) when ABC withdrew its rights and sold them elsewhere.

## ANGLO AVENGERS

**THE AVENGERS** also featured in another comic during 1966, a one-issue item under the title *The Avengers* from Thorpe and Porter. The comic included four strips black-and-white strips featuring the popular duo of Steed and Mrs Peel, and was drawn and edited by Mick Anglo. Anglo was a veteran figure as editor/artist/publisher in British comics, having created *Wonderman* for DYNAMIC, *ACE MALLOY*, *Captain Valiant* for SPACE COMICS and *MARVELMAN* as well as being involved in hundreds of one-off funnies and westerns in the 1940s and 1950s, and other TV one-offs like *DANGER MAN* (Thorpe and Porter, 1965) and *THE MAN FROM UNCLE WORLD ADVENTURE LIBRARY* (World Distributors, 1968) - plus the TV *HERDES*. *The Avengers* was pretty dreadful by present day standards, with suspects in the whodunnits looking so different from frame to frame that their unmasking on the penultimate page made little impact. Since on a couple of occasions Steed is referred to as 'Drake', it cannot be ruled out that these were once *Danger Man* strips.



TV COMIC *Adam Adamant* (1967) - B/W artwork by Bill Titcombe

## THE ICEMAN COMETH

TV COMIC gained a new British Telefantasy hero inside its pages with Issue 788 (14th January 1967), the annual relaunch issue that combined improvements and new titles from City Magazines. This was gone other than *Adam Adamant* from the BBC's reasonably successful *ADAM ADAMANT LIVES!*, which had just begun its second season. The strip featuring Gerald Harper's Victorian gentleman adventurer in the Swinging London of 1967 was initially illustrated by Bill Titcombe. Titcombe was best known for his brief comic style of cartoon drawing and had previously handled the strips for 'fancies' such as *The Trollopoloo* which *Adam Adamant* replaced. Hence, *Adam's* initial escapades were more on the comic side. Georgina Jones and Staines were absent, and instead a young lad called Buster accompanied Adam on his first few adventures. The AA1000 Mini Cooper S was also replaced by a vintage car, again indicating that TV COMIC understood very little of what the series was about. Titcombe soon came off the strip to work on more suitable items like the best page item of *Ken Dodd's Diddymen* (and later *Amos Magic*), with Pat Williams taking over part way into *The Curse of Tazarkimont*. From Issue 801 (22nd April 1967), Williams' artwork appeared on only one page (as opposed to the two allocated to Titcombe), and remained in this format for the rest of the year until its final appearance in Issue 835 (16th December 1967). Buster vanished, and in the storyline *Footnote* in the *Ward* Adam gained his faithful Merv and a new temporary companion in Paul George (depending on the issue). The stories were a mixture of the suitably offbeat and the routine bangers. By this time, the BBC had long since cancelled the show and the Victorian adventurer found himself replaced by *Shoggy*, the *Blash Kangaroo*.

Apart from another TV star album in Issue 788 (with an early colour publicity shot of Patrick Troughton's Doctor from the following week), the main change for TV COMIC was the acquisition of rights to feature the Daleks in *Doctor Who*. The strip was now given a prominent status without of in the comic's history: a colour cover and two interior black and white pages. Retired *Doctor Who* and the Daleks, the strip continued to be illustrated by Canning, whose first storyline saw *Doctor Who*, John and Gillian on their way to Tynes for a third meeting with the Dalek-initiates. However, on their arrival they found that the initiates had been wiped out by the genuine item, and so the Doctor got involved in the first of several escapades against the Dalek empire that spread out from Sicily. The Daleks lacked the impact of the atmospheric work of Jennings or the graphic boldness of Turner as seen in *TV CENTURY 21*, but the results were still acceptable. Not every storyline featured Nation's creations despite the title of the strip.

From Issue 804 (17th June 1967), the cover strip reverted to the title of just *Doctor Who*, with the twenty-one week option on use of the Daleks expiring - supposedly since Terry Nation wanted to sell the concept of a Dalek TV film series in America. Three weeks later, *Doctor Who*, John and Gillian materialised in black-and-white back inside the magazine for standard two-page owners from Canning. Without the Daleks, the editorial staff needed another TV enemy to face the Doctor, and so during the summer of 1967, rights were negotiated with the BBC, Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis to feature the Cybermen, who had debuted with *The Tenth Planet* in October 1966 and were featuring in *The Tenth of the Cybermen* just as they made their TV COMIC debut. Canning was provided with BBC publicity shots of the original Cybermen from *The Tenth Planet*, and was to use this likeness over the next two years, despite the Cybermen's radically different TV appearances. The Cybermen featured on an irregular basis through to the early months of 1968, and their first appearance in Issue 824 (29th September 1967) saw the return of *Doctor Who* to the colour pages of the comic.



TV COMIC continued into 1968 with Canning still drawing the colour adventures of Doctor Who as the Doctor (now armed with a *Robson*-style utility belt which filled the same function as his earlier magic bag) and his grandchildren continued to combat the Cythemen and a variety of other non-TV nasties. During the spring though, TV Publications ceased to exist, with Associated-Rediffusion losing its TV franchise for London weekdays. The subsequent merger with ABC to form Thames Television meant that Rediffusion were obliged by the ITA to sell TV Publications and rights to the ITV listings magazines. Whilst Rediffusion mounted a publishing arm into Polystyle Publishing Ltd with issue 851 (4th April 1968) and allowed TV COMIC to continue, the ITV listings magazines went to Independent Television Publications - who would soon be behind a TV comic of their own.

Doctor Who turned up in a couple of Canning strips for Jane's TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL. Then in issue 872 (31st August 1968), the long journey for Doctor Who's grandchildren John and Gillian finally ended as the Doctor decided to enrol them at University on the planet Zebodon, travelling on in the TARDIS to arrive in Scotland where he encountered two newly licensed images from the television series. The first of these was the Quarks, small robot servants of the Dominators created by Morrys Haimson and Henry Lincoln for the serial *The Dominators* that was being screened at the time. The BBC had hoped that the Quarks would become the next 'big' monster after the Cythemen and the Daleks, but due to differences between the BBC and Haimson-Lincoln, they were instead to end up as long-running as the Zarks. Nevertheless, the Quarks were to appear frequently over the next few months in Canning's strip, expanding their Quark empire. The other character who appeared from Issue 873 (7th September 1968) was Jamie McCrimmon, the first television companion to appear in the comic strip. Jamie, as played by Frazer Hines, had been in DOCTOR WHO since December 1966 and was now felt to be a central element alongside the Troughton Doctor and the TARDIS.



TV COMIC: *The Avengers* (1970) - B/W artwork by John Canning

TV COMIC underwent another revamp with Issue 877 (5th October 1968) in which Doctor Who was relegated to battling the Quarks in black-and-white, and the colour pages were assigned to the likes of *Banji Bunch*. Replacing *Gyldens* came the return of *The Avengers* - starting two weeks after the debut of Season Seven in most regions. Steed was now partnered by young agent Tara King, and John Canning's one page black-and-white strip now moved into more whimsical and surreal territories than the earlier outings for the Seed-Peel duo. The second storyline in which military equipment was militarised was strongly reminiscent of Mission... Highly Improbable, as episode of the TV series from 1967

Jamie's time as a TARDIS traveller ended abruptly with TV COMIC Issue 898 (1st March 1969) as he vanished without explanation at the end of a cerebral little escapade in which Doctor Who designed a new household robot which fell under control of the Quarks. The Doctor continued to travel alone through increasingly unlikely Canning strips, battling Quarks and Cythemen as well as rescuing various people in distress. *The Avengers*, also under Canning's pen, was far more in the style of the series with stories about earth-borrowing devices used for bank robberies and ice cream that induced hypnotic suggestion. Doctor Who and *The Avengers* were both represented in TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL issued in June 1969.

On BBC1 on 21st June 1969, the moonchrome days of DOCTOR WHO came to an end as Patrick Troughton's Doctor was exiled to Earth by the Time Lords. Whilst it was known that his arrival there would be in the form of Jon Pertwee, the ilk of Doctor Who's second incarnation was

lengthened in TV COMIC. The Doctor's exile began in Issue 916 (5th July 1969) as the time traveller checked into the Carlton Grange Hotel in London and settled down to spend a few months giving lectures, investigating strange crimes and getting involved in a few science-fiction storylines. The strips, scripted by Roger Noel Cook, came to a temporary end in Issue 936 (22nd November 1969) when the Troughton Doctor's comic adventures reached a conclusion. The Doctor, lured to a field after appearing on a TV panel game, fell prey to the sinister figure of living scarecrows, who - as servants of the Time Lords - immobilised Doctor Who and forced him into the TARDIS to regenerate, leaving a startled Farmer Gleadick-Hogan to flee the scene commenting "No karmar being will believe the account of what I've witnessed".

## KEY REPRINTS

**THE AVENGERS** also appeared in a second one-shot comic, this time a US import from Gold Key in November 1968. With the cover title of John Steed - Emma Peel (to avoid problems with Marvel's *The Avengers* title - although the error read *The Avengers No 1*), the comic was nothing more than a low quality reprint of two colourised strips from the 1965-6 run in TV COMIC, with a colour shot of the heroes on the cover from *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Station*.

## AVENGING WITH DIANA

After his departure from TV COMIC in September 1966, the new home for THE AVENGERS was to result in one of the most beautiful and stylish television related comic strips ever could be found tucked away between the 'usual rubbish' in the pages of the girl's comic DIANA. Launched by D.C. Thomson & Co. Ltd on 23rd February 1968, the title would run through to 4th December 1976 before passing into the obscurity of girls' fiction. However, with the historical serial *Answering with the Secret Box* concluded in Issue 196, another two page colour strip was needed to stand alongside the dubious delights of *Starr of Wonderland* (girl with flying suit), *Ingrid* (girl whose nose glowed red when trouble started), *Jungle Nurse* (oblivious) and *The Girls from NOODLES* (don't ask). Somehow, the rights were acquired from ABC for a strip based on THE AVENGERS, presumably on the grounds that both comic and star career shared the same christian name since the comic did not feature TV related strips.

*The Avengers* started with Issue 199 (10th December 1968), a few weeks before Season Five would debut. The colour artwork (possibly by the artist Gosselin) was superb, with most frames of Steed and Mrs Peel based extremely closely on photographs taken during production of Seasons Four and Five. The multi-episode serials were pretty outlandish and wacky, and certainly better associated than in TV COMIC. Phantom Pipers appeared in Scots ski lodges (shades of *Castle De'Ath*), an evil fashion designer made golden dresses that hypnotised the wearers, Vikings attempted to steal atom bombs and a group of midgets conducted jewel robberies disguised as children and toys. Diana Rigg appeared on the cover of Issue 204 (14th January 1969) to coincide with the show's return on TV, and the strip was certainly a suitable companion to the real thing, even down to the serial logo and the main lines each week (e.g. "In which *The Avengers* go shopping - and Steed gets more than he bargained for"). The twenty-six issue run concluded in Issue 224 (3rd June 1969), after which eager young ladies had to make do with the delights of blinded ice skaters, *Too Tall for Her Class* (about a tall schoolgirl) and the other routine material.



DIANA: *The Avengers* (1967) - Colour artwork possibly by Gosselin

## PLANETARY CONFINEMENT

TV COMIC entered its third decade with Issue 942 (3rd January 1970) and a line-up which included *Tom & Jerry* by Thimble, *Sanli Bark*, *Tick and Quacken*, *Rage Bawny* and *Pagayo*. Also still in the running was *The Avengers* from Canning, the stories of which were becoming even stranger than usual. Captain Kenta, an officer captured for cowardice, set out to prove Stead's own cowardice by projecting Stead and Tara into a series of fantasy worlds using his dream machine. Wilhelm Sigwald, the Kaiser of Crime, toured around England in his Zeppelin threatening to drop a germ bomb in a narrow aisle a fifty million posed rascals was paid. The Avengers faced Dr. Weatherby, a rogue scientist who could control the weather from his base on a Scots island, whilst a disgruntled farmer called Johnson sprays England with a powder that creates giant plants and giant insect life. Stead and Tara were now joined in some strip by Mother, their rotund wheel-chair bound boss who was played on television by Patrick Newell. Mother's side Rhonda was conspicuous by her absence.

DOCTOR WHO made its colour debut on 3rd January 1970 with the arrival of Jon Pertwee's Doctor on Earth for a period of exile. The strip had been absent from TV COMIC for a few weeks but was now back featuring the Pertwee version of Doctor Who, an exiled Time Lord working for Brigadier Lethbridge Stewart of UNIT. Early storylines from the likes of Roger Cook did not capture the spirit of the new head-biting action image of the TV show at all well, instead playing the strip even more far laughs than before. UNIT was called in to investigate such matters to society as a schoolboy who has created a gun that induces aggression - a few cry from murderous display maniacs and alien ambassadors. Starting with Issue 960 (9th May 1970), the character of Liz Shaw, the Doctor's assistant at UNIT played by Caroline John, was introduced, along with Doctor Who's car Bessie. Later strips written by Alan Fennell (who had now secured some work at Polystyle after working on U.F.O.) tended to have a bit more guts to them and also some more complex plots, including the Doctor exposing a faked Martian landing. The UNIT element of the strip - including the Brigadier and Liz - was dropped after Issue 976 (29th August 1970), by which time it was known that Liz Shaw would not be remaining in Season Eight. Doctor Who, still travelling in Bessie, was now more of a freelance investigative scientist. As usual, the exiled Time Lord also turned up in a couple of strips in TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL in May 1970.

A new face in TV COMIC was Carwazle, the wizard who fell through time from 1087 to 1970 in LWT's comedy-fantasy film series. The comic debut came in Issue 949 (21st February 1970), a week after its appearance on most ITV regions. As a one page black-and-white strip down in mild caricature by Bill Lacey, the humour and style of Richard Carpenter's scripts and Geoffrey Bayldon's strange performance were captured perfectly. Initially, the characters of Carrot, the young boy who befriended Carwazle, and his father Mr Bennett also appeared, although they were generally phased out after Issue 978 (12th September 1970).



TV COMIC Doctor Who (1970) - Black and white artwork by John Canning

TV COMIC passed its thousandth issue the week after Doctor Who absconded to its new sister publication *COUNTDOWN* (see later), so Canning could now concentrate on *Shoggy* and *The Avengers*. The storylines of the latter were still suitably offbeat, particularly a very enjoyable serial in which a sterner master called Septimus Crump was plotting the theft of a main load of gold bullion which was close to the spirit of the late lamented series. Remains of the Tara King episodes on many ITV regions kept the series enough in the public eye for Polystyle to maintain the rights, but the stories down by Canning started to become suitably offbeat and satirical. The arrival of strange packets at a London toy shop led to a farcical scrap of giants and bonanzas, and a compulsive rhythm makes everyone in England start dancing until they collapsed.

## MIDDLE AGES MAGIC

Lacey also continued to draw *Carwazle* through to Issue 1033 (2nd October 1971) whilst ITV screened the second season in the spring of 1971. Accordingly, the new second season sidelink of Carwazle (played by Gary Warren) made his debut in Issue 1009 (17th April 1971) but did not remain around for long. One of the best and funniest serials concerned Carwazle being admitted to hospital for suspected poisoning, where he had an X-ray and saw his bones photographed before him. Scuffling around the hospital that night, he then found a skeleton and believed that all the bones had been removed from his body! It was notable that the subsequent story, in which Carwazle got involved in a magician's stage act, would form the basis for his next set of adventures in *LOOKIN* the following year.



TV COMIC Carwazle (1970) - B/W artwork by Bill Lacey

By 1972, TV COMIC was not as stylish as *COUNTDOWN*, but still healthy. THE AVENGERS was now concluding its reprieve and so Canning's strip about the series ended in Issue 1076 (12th August 1972). By this time the ideas were running out very badly (not surprisingly as the four year run in the comic was far longer than Linda Thorson's TV sojourn) and a variety of ideas were repeated - notably the concept of Stead and Tara guarding somebody who doesn't know they are in danger (done with Colonel Flinthog in 1971 and tried with Mother in the final strip this year).

## SHADO ... AND THE REST

The existing TV COMIC companion title with a televisual leaning was *COUNTDOWN*, also from Polystyle. Interest in SF seemed to be on the increase, particularly with regards Jon Pertwee's presence in DOCTOR WHO. Gerry Anderson's struggling live action U.F.O. and the plethora of Supermarionation repeats. The new comic would thus have an SF feel (the pages were actually numbered in reverse so that they did indeed count down), and was to be edited by Dennis Hooper, one of the TV CENTURY 21 team. Issue 1 (20th February 1971) offered a link up of U.F.O. (in comic form for the first time), Dr Who (transferred from TV COMIC), Thunderbirds and Captain Scarlet (both available once the Anderson shows had been pulled out of TFI and Joe 90). The other comic strip, a

Sold the secret affair in full colour to John Byrne, who was working on a space adventure featuring spacehips from the film 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY.

The format for COUNTDOWN was very flexible, with some strips being a whole five or six pages complete story in one issue, or a traditional serial of two pages each week. At times, other strips would be rested for some weeks before reappearing. There were features on space exploration, with much emphasis on the Apollo Missions. Whilst U.F.O. had completed production in the summer of 1970, DOCTOR WHO was then recording Season Eight, and a close rapport built up by Hooper with producer Barry Letts and script editor Terrance Dicks. Dr Who now had far more serious stories than the somewhat whimsical escapades of TV COMIC, seeing Pertwee's Doctor as a man of action. So during the time of the Doctor's exile on contemporary Earth, the Time Lord was trying to repair his TARDIS at a cottage/laboratory he owned. The UNIT element was effectively ignored. The artist on the two page colour strip was Harry Lindfield, who created some very beautiful pieces of art.

U.F.O. began its comic life with a one issue black-and-white story drawn by Joe Davis, and then continued as a colour two page item drawn by Gerry Haylock. Haylock's artwork was not massively detailed, but captured the spirit of characters and always appeared to move well, suggesting action and activity. Thunderbirds was handled by Don Harley, who produced new black-and-white art for the first six months of COUNTDOWN. Captain Scarlet began with a new strip from John Cooper which began as two black-and-white pages, but was a single page from Issue 2. When the first storyline concluded in Issue 5 (20th March 1971), Captain Scarlet became only a series of one-off stories for the rest of the year, drawn by a variety of artists including Malcolm Stokes, Lewis, Ashby and Watson. Watson's strip in Issue 32 (25th September 1971) was of particular note since it featured the return of the Rock Snakes from the feature film THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO.

## THE MAN FROM B.I.S.H.O.P.

THE SECRET SERVICE - Gerry and Sylvia Anderson's soldiers soon live action/puppet comedy/spionage - made its first comic appearance in Issue 2 (27th February 1971) with a complete story drawn by Davis that set up the format for the series and saw Father Ursin actually receiving the minister which he was to use on his mission. Following this, Peter Ford illustrated an enjoyable and suitably unlikely storyline which ran for one page each week from Issue 4 up to Issue 7 (3rd April 1971). Then the strip vanished - its comic life being briefer even than its TV exposure (since only three ITV regions screened the show, Polystyle were concerned about alienating readers with a programme that they could not relate to).

Also appearing from Issue 2 was JOE 90 which had also fared badly on the ITV regions. Davis handled the one page monochrome story *Josef Nivenski* from Issues 2 to 7, whereafter the nine year old agent appeared in only two further serials: *Spy School* drawn by Davis in Issue 8 (10th April

1971) and as a serialised storyline handled by Michael Stroud in Issue 16 (5th June 1971). This was also the end of the line for Joe 90 in recent form.

Stroud also handled a couple of storylines for Stingray, which began with a complete story in Issue 3 (6th March 1971), and then continued as a mixture of two page serials and complete stories for the next few months. Aside from Stroud's first serial (a strange affair in which a Titan-like underwater leader whose organisation has a Terror Fish-like emblem sends a scientist to infiltrate Marinerville), Rob Hamilton handled the serial *The Waters of Hyde* whilst Colin Page and Brian Lewis drew the two other complete stories.

*Lady Penelope*, shedding her youthful alter-ego of girls comics, regained her true status and her Frank Langford artwork with a complete serial in Issue 4 (13th March 1971), and appeared in two further complete stories by Langford and Stroud. *Fireball XL5* made its COUNTDOWN debut in Issue 5 with *Giant Tenzers* drawn by Page. There were then a couple more complete stories from Hamilton and Lewis, plus a monochrome two page serial from Stokes. Zero X turned up in two complete stories, handled by Watson in Issue 12 (8th May 1971) and Stokes in Issue 27 (21st August 1971). With Zero X's only true appearance being in the five year old THUNDERBIRDS movie, it was an early casualty.

In June 1971, a COUNTDOWN HOLIDAY SPECIAL appeared containing a new Davis U.F.O. strip, a Dr Who text story and reprints of material from TV CENTURY 21 comprising a Stingray strip and the Hampden Fireball XL5 storyline. Polystyle also produced a special reprint issue entitled THUNDERBIRDS the same month, reproducing three complete stories from TV CENTURY 21.

## BLAST FROM THE PAST

To save on rights and clearances at COUNTDOWN, there were also a variety of complete stories which were not based on TV shows. The first signs of cost cutting came with Issue 21 (30th July 1971) where the now seldom-seen FIREBALL XL5 was relegated to being a series of black-and-white reprints from TV CENTURY 21, with the original colour artwork reprinted from the Express Group and reduced to fit into two half-pages alongside features. Issue 23 (24th July 1971) offered a colour reprint of Emblion's artwork from TV CENTURY 21 for the Stingray strip, which the following week was reproduced in black-and-white, and would continue to be (apart from odd colour issues) for some time. From Issue 24 (31st July 1971) to 30 (11th September 1971), a Bletchley Thunderbirds storyline was reprinted in black-and-white, although Harley returned to draw some new storylines with Issue 45 (25th December 1971) after a gap of some months. Captain Scarlet, Joe 90, Zero X and Lady Penelope had simply vanished, and the number of complete stories not based on TV shows increased notably.

The strips that fared best after the first few months of COUNTDOWN were only U.F.O., Doctor Who and Countdown itself. Haylock earned out some excellent colour serials, with Davis filling in for him for three issues at the end of the story *The Switch*. The emphasis on U.F.O. was increased from Issue 40 (30th November 1971) where it was turned into a complete six page story each week illustrated by a mixture of artists: Davis, Hamilton, Lewis, Stokes and Ashby. Haylock in turn was moved onto Doctor Who. Prior to this, the Doctor's previous adventures had been handled by Frank Langford, whose colour material was a fine substitute for Lindfield (although some issues were printed in black-and-white). Lindfield in turn had fared on Doctor Who with Issue 32 (25th September 1971) so that the following week he could start on the new strip, *The Persuaders*. This was to be an indication of the way that COUNTDOWN, as added television in general was moving. Debating in September 1971, THE PERSUADERS was an action series which ended up in COUNTDOWN, despite the lack of SF content and became the new high profile entry in the comic, at first taking up three colour pages.

A MOVEMENT IN THE SNOW!

JOE NINETY TO BASE. MISSION COMPLETED.

OKAY, JOE. HELMET WAITING AT MAP REFERENCE FOUR.

COUNTDOWN: Joe 90 (1971) - Artwork by Jon Davis



COUNTDOWN: The Secret Service (1971) - B/W artwork by Joe Davis

COUNTDOWN was still going well at the start of 1972, with the Daleks returning to Haylock's Doctor Who strip in Issue 47 (8th January 1972), in a story called 'Sub Zero' where they hijacked an atomic submarine for an attack on Sydney. The Daleks were also the villains of the next piece, *The Flower of the Daleks* in which they attempted to turn the Doctor into a human Dalek. U.F.O., *Thunderbirds* and *The Persimmon* continued, the latter illustrated by an alternating combination of Lindfield and Langford.

MINUTES LATER, IN STEAKERS' OFFICE...



COUNTDOWN for TV ACTION: UFO (1972) - B/w artwork by Jon Davis

## COUNTDOWN FOR TV ACTION!

With TV SF on the way out with the failure of U.F.O. (the next Gerry Anderson series would be a thriller called *THE PROTECTORS*), the time had come for *COUNTDOWN* to adapt. With Issue 57 (18th March 1972), the title was modified to *TV ACTION IN COUNTDOWN*, and then with Issue 59 (1st April 1972) to *TV ACTION + COUNTDOWN* as Houghton explained to the readers that text and not space would sell the product. The Action element would be provided predominantly by thriller and adventure series, with SF taking more of a back seat. However, it was a telefantasy series, *Dr Who*, that now graced the cover of the relaunched publication, with Haylock providing a colour cover and two interior black and white pages each week. U.F.O. returned to being a two-page black-and-white serial drawn by Lewis, then Davis, and finally residing in the charge of John Barnes after *Countdown* (the strip) ended its run in Issue 70 (17th June 1972). With the arrival of *Burra*, the strip was generally printed in colour again, making full use of the artist's clever layouts. The *Stargay* reprint from *TV CENTURY 21* became colour for a few issues before reverting to black-and-white. New comic strips included *Tightrope* by Stanley Houghton and *Hawaii Five-O*. A *TV ACTION + COUNTDOWN HOLIDAY SPECIAL* was published in March 1972 with a U.F.O. strip, a *Dr Who* text story and a *TV 21* reprint *Captain Scarlet* strip.

Issue 63 of *TV ACTION + COUNTDOWN* (29th May 1972) saw the return of *Captain Scarlet* but simply in the form of reprinted *TV CENTURY 21* strips. The last original *Thunderbirds* from Bailey appeared in Issue 60 (8th April 1972), leaving only colour reprints from *TV CENTURY 21* running from Issue 71 (24th June 1972). *Stargay* concluded in Issue 76, to be replaced by reprints of various monochrome *Football XLS* strips from *TV CENTURY 21*. *Zero X* also appeared as colour reprints from the same source from Issue 83 (9th September 1972), and a new black-and-white strip by John Barnes, *Mission: Impossible*, appeared from Issue 88 (21st October 1972). At this time a *Dr Who* strip called *The Uxbridge* was just concluding, the monsters having been created by reader Ian Fairbridge: as a result of the competition run in Issues 59 and 60 after the relaunch. There were still some nice touches like full colour photographs of stars from the shows that the comic covered.

## THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

*COUNTDOWN* was phased out totally with Issue 101 (26th January 1973) with the banner title read just *TV ACTION*. The format now changed considerably. There was less colour with the comic now produced by the Web Offset method instead of photogravure. *Dr Who* was removed from the front page, which now featured a puzzling heralding what was known as the 'big story' each week. Each *TV ACTION* had a 'big story' running to seven black-and-white pages split in half across the comic. This would be

based on a different series each week, with the strips raised through being serials, being reprinted or occupying the 'big story' slot. The only telefantasy elements left were *Dr Who* and U.F.O. along with *The Persimmon* (now handled by John Ortiz), *Hawaii Five-O* and *Mission: Impossible*. New strips included Anderson's *The Protectors* drawn by John Ortiz and Rab Hamilton, *Alma Smith* and *Jonas* from Colin Andrew, Cannon by Miffie Ashbury and *Dad's Army* by Peter Ford.

U.F.O. remained the domain of Barnes, who provided four serial stories and four 'big stories' in the coming months. One notably colour storyline was *The Million Year-Old Trap* in which Foster and some aliens encountered the ancient remains of another civilisation on the Moon, which still held a deadly trap. Haylock also kept control of *Dr Who* with four colour serials and five 'big stories'. These included the first comic strip appearance of the Master, the Doctor's Time Lord adversary as played by Roger Delgado, in *The Glen of Sleeping* and an appearance from the Daleks in *The Threat from Beneath*. The format changes were not enough to keep *TV ACTION* afloat, and the detective *Idem* book sank finally with Issue 132 (25th August 1973). Thus was the end of the road for U.F.O. as a strip, but *Dr Who* struggled aboard the lifeboat and made back for the safety of its original home, Polyteyl's *TV COMIC*.

Before the total demise of *TV ACTION*, Polyteyl issued a *DALEK WHO HOLIDAY SPECIAL* in May 1973. This magazine was a lavish little gem which contained photographs from the ten years of the series plus features, a look behind the scenes on *Frontier in Space* a last story and a variety of comic strips - two of which were serials of the finest serials written. The first, *Fogbound* by Frank Langford saw the Doctor and an old blind friend of his called Joe venturing into the fog-covered seaside town of Taldarion to combat a scheme of the Master's. The second, *Secret of the Tower* by Alex Bledis was a dynamic story in which the Doctor and UNIT pursued a fanatical master of disguise through tunnels under London in an attempt to save the crown jewels. The third strip, *Dalek Deal*, was a re-edited monochrome reprint of the third storyline from *TV CENTURY 21's The Daleks*. The following month there was a *TV ACTION HOLIDAY SPECIAL* which included an Ashbury U.F.O. strip and another *Dr Who* text story.

## THE RETURN OF WHO

With the merger of *TV ACTION*, *TV COMIC* plus *TV ACTION* gained *Dad's Army* (now drawn by Tizmore), Cannon and the old favourite of Doctor Who, being relaunched with the merger at Issue 1153 (1st September 1973). Doctor Who as still drawn by Haylock and written by Geoff Cawston - and thus kept its generally high standards instead of retreating to the levels of former *TV COMIC* items. The first of the new serials, *Children of the Evil Eye*, saw the Doctor gaining a new companion in the form of Arnold, a child from the thirty-second century where the adult population had been subjugated and had its will removed by a youth called Oswald. Arnold joined the Doctor in *Nova* against the horrific Spiders, and returned home at the start of *The Amulet*. During this particular serial, the comic title reverted to *TV COMIC* with Issue 1159 (29th December 1973), all set to start afresh for the new year.



TV COMIC Doctor Who (1974) - B/w artwork by Gerry Haylock

Soon the Daleks turned up again behind a plot to disrupt Earth's economy in *The Disintegrator*, a strip which also saw the brief return of Bonnie. Haylock continued to deliver some excellent black-and-white artwork, and the stories too were generally of a very high standard. The strip continued throughout the year but with *TV COMIC* merging with *TOM AND JERRY WEEKLY*, a comic aimed at the younger market, the good Doctor now shared a comic with characters like the likes of Roobarb the cartoon dog. The reunited *TV COMIC* plus *TOM AND JERRY WEEKLY* began with Issue

1152 (20th August 1974) and ran to the end of the year, reverting to plain old-fashioned TV COMIC with Issue 1202 (28th December 1974). This coincided with the start of Tom Baker's tenure as the Doctor on television, which would show up in TV COMIC within a fortnight.

During May 1974, Polystyle also issued a second DOCTOR WHO HOLIDAY SPECIAL, although this contained less feature material and photographs than before. Three strips appeared featuring the adventures of Jon Pertwee's Doctor and Elisabeth Sladen's Sarah Jane Smith, all by unidentified artists whom Dennis Hooper was basically 'trying out' on the magazine. The best of these, Who's Who?, was an Inferno-type story/line in which the Doctor and Sarah jumped sideways in time in the TARDIS to find that their counterparts on an alternate Earth were ruthless gangsters. There was also another amended reprint of The Daleks. Also from Polystyle was TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL offering a text story about Pertwee's Doctor.

## THOSE RADIO TIMES

Beautiful DOCTOR WHO artwork was not restricted to COUNTDOWN. Since departing the Thunderbirds strips, Frank Bellamy had also been working as an illustrator on RADIO TIMES, delivering colour and black-and-white work for BBC programme listings. Including STAR TREK With the start of Colony in Space on Saturday 10th April 1971, RADIO TIMES heralded Episode One with a three-page adaptation of the first few minutes drawn by Bellamy. As a result of this, Bellamy became a key illustrator for RADIO TIMES DOCTOR WHO material up to his death in July 1976. In addition to small illustrations for many cast lists for Seasons Nine and Ten he also produced a colour artwork cover for Day of the Daleks (30th December 1971) and another colour piece to illustrate an article for Terror of the Zygons (28th August 1975).



## LOOK OUT FOR LOOK-INI

Both TV COMIC and COUNTDOWN TV ACTION were to face competition from the early Seventies onwards. To fill the need for a 'Junior TV Times', Independent Television Publications Ltd launched a comic/magazine/TV listing for younger viewers at the start of 1971. Originally the title for this was to be MAGPIE, linking in with Thames Television's attempt to grab the BLUE PETER market, but the eventual title was LOOK-INI. Produced on high quality paper and with lots of colour, LOOK-INI's first issue was dated Saturday 9th January 1971, featuring articles on pop music, nature and science alongside text and strip stories devoted to current ITV favourites, all edited by Alan Fennell who was assisted by Colin Shelbourne as art editor. The original line up prominently featured a colour two-page strip drawn by Mike Noble and usually written by Angus Allen based on TIMESLIP, plus a black and



LOOK-INI: Timeslip (1971) - Colour artwork by Mike Noble

white two-page adventure with *Freewheelers* drawn by Alcazar. Also featured were Tom Kerr's *Crowder in Trouble* and *Please Sir!*.

*Timeslip* started off particularly well, with Noble's art giving exciting adventures, and Simon and Liz based on publicity photographs from *The Time of the Ice Box* (hence Liz retained her red cardigan and Simon his blue sweater for the strip's duration). In the first serial, Liz's parents and Commander Traynor also appeared and continually with the time bubble at St. Oswalds was closely adhered to. Storylines dovetailed into one another, hence in Issue 5 (6th February 1971), an adventure in the far future with primitive man and aliens concluded, and the children slipped into a robot dominated world on the second page. The second storyline, set on the machine ruled Earth of 3547 AD, featured a huge floating space platform called the Interplanetary Research Unit which bore more than a passing resemblance to *Cloudhaze*. This story in turn went to a new locale mid-way through Issue 14 (10th April 1971) as Liz and Simon wound up in Ancient Egypt. Traynor was last seen briefly helping to raise the sunken vessel the 'Maid of Falmost' from St. Oswald's harbour in Issue 21, as the final *celcius* *Timeslip* serial began.

The first *Freewheelers* strip was a suitably atmospheric serial concerning an escape chain for foreign agents. The line up was that of Season Five which debuted a couple of weeks later: Max, Mike, Sue and Major Graham of M16. The second story, featuring the more stylised art of Brian Lewis, introduced the familiar character of Colonel Buchanan, as played by Ronald Leigh-Hunt who had been absent from Season Five, working in the oil state of Rabat. The third story, *Flight into Danger*, was a peculiar mixture of text and artwork. Each two-page instalment began with three panels of art by Noble, and ended with three more panels, but in between the story was printed in text. The fourth story, probably by Pinos, reverted to the strip format and ended with Issue 26 (2nd July 1971), after which the strip was rest of because *FREEWHEELERS* had been off the air for three months.



LOOK-INI: *Freewheelers* (1972) - Black and white artwork by Carlos Pinos

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

During the first year, strips changed with the addition of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and *Bright's Boffins*. Another idea was to have comic strips that were not based on television series, but have them introduced by a TV personality, such as Kenneth Cope (Issue 23: 12th June 1971), Spencer Banks and Cheryl Burfield (Issue 35: 4th September 1971) and Ronald Leigh-Hunt (Issue 38: 25th September 1971). The big change came with Issue 27 in which the popular series *Follyfoot* began.

Since this was the main strip, it replaced *Timeslip* on the colour pages and had Noble as its artist, with Liz and Simon relegated to black-and-white in place of *Freezebenders* with another unknown artist whose work, whilst adequate, lacked the style of Noble. The new series of storylines were not of the same calibre as before and saw Liz and Simon hide venturing to the Moon amongst other places, with another, better, artist taking over the strip from Issue 37 (18th September 1971). Noble returned briefly for a storyline starting in Issue 47 (27th November 1971), which used the common plot of the children using the time hamster to investigate something in the past – a concept which altered the strip considerably beyond the format of the TV series.

There were many related TV features and pin-ups in the first year of *LOOK-IN*. These covered *CATWEAZLE* (Issues 3 and 10), *TIMESLIP* (Issues 9 and 24), *U.F.O.* (Issues 19 and 24), *RANDALL AND HOPEKIRK* (DISCEASED) and *ITC* shows (Issue 21). *THE AVENGERS* and spy shows (Issue 22), *JAMIE* (Issue 26), *ACE OF WANDS* (Issue 28), *FREZWHEELERS* (Issue 43) and several other *ITC* products (such as *THE PERSUADERS!* in Issue 40). New items included *On the Beach* from Harry North and *The Flaming Boy* which had transferred from *TV COMIC*. Issue 40 (9th October 1971) was the first issue to replace the photographic cover with one of the starring colour portrait passages, usually completed by Arnaldo Puzos, which would be a regular feature of the comic through the decade. An attempt was made to secure the rights for *ACE OF WANDS* as a strip in *LOOK-IN*, but the show's creator, Trevor Preston, showed an interest in writing the storylines himself in a style which did not fit in with the publisher's plans.

*Freezebenders* returned with Issue 50, just as transmission of *Season Six* was drawing to a close. After a brief and simplistic espionage storyline, the final strip by Pinos began in Issue 2 of 1972 (each year had individually numbered issues, with 51 in the 1971 volume). For the first time, a notable fantasy element was injected in common with the bizarre invasions from the TV show, in this case a humanoid robot who kidnapped a man involved with the development of a new underwater detection system. *Freezebenders'* final appearance came in Issue 11 (11th March 1972).

*Timeslip* continued to decline as 1972 wore on, although it still managed to grace the cover of Issue 27. No longer was the time hamster located neatly at St. Oswald's defence station. Now Liz and Simon could be frequently found leaving a cinema together discussing the wild west or Robin Hood, and suddenly find themselves scooped up in the high street and whisked back to said time period to assist it for themselves. The stories were now seldom connected, and became more outlandish – notably a visit to a planet of research and entertainment where all the dreams Liz and Simon have come true (Issues 5 to 9). The kids could now even leave Earth and arrive on another planet, encountered two monsters brought to life by lightning and suited with the Ancient Mariner in settings far removed from the grisly SF concepts of the television show. The final bizarre outing for Liz and Simon came in a two-part story ending in Issue 50 (9th December 1972) where the children did not even enter the time bubble but were projected into a surreal mish-mash of Earth history by a passing UFO.

## A SPELL IN LOOK-IN

Like *The Flaming Boy*, another strip to make the jump from *TV COMIC* to *LOOK-IN* was *Catweazle*, with a comedy/adventure strip over two black-and-white pages starting in Issue 2 (8th January 1972). Borrowing as ideas from its former incarnation, the new strip saw Catweazle teaming up with a stage magician the Great Boedini (Fred Bond) after leaping forward through time to escape the Normans. The storyline, which was initially drawn by John Stokes and then later by an unknown Spanish Artist, was a generally rambling affair at first, with long chains of incidents and misadventures. Catweazle was befriended by Bond's son, Jos, and hid behind the stage set in general, through making Touchwood into a giant and winding up by ransacking a feature film. With Issue 23, self-contained stories were introduced featuring Catweazle, Jos Bond and Boedini, some of which again borrowed from *TV COMIC*. With the series having completed its run the previous year, Catweazle bowed out of *LOOK-IN* with Issue 45 of the 1972 volume. New strips brought in during the year included *Doctor in Charge* by Kerr, *Elephant Boy*, *Puffblowers* and *The Fawn Street Gang* by Kerr. Current programmes like *ESCAPE INTO NIGHT* and *PARDON MY GENIE* were featured in articles. 1972 was the first year to see the regular summer edition of *LOOK-IN HOLIDAY SPECIAL*, featuring a three-page Catweazle strip.

A new extremely popular strip and television series set to replace the SF element of *Timeslip* was first heralded in Issue 18 of the 1973 volume of *LOOK-IN* (and also in *TV ACTION* Issue 110 on 24th March 1973). This was *THE TOMORROW PEOPLE* which began transmission in the late Spring of that year. The replacement for *ACE OF WANDS* proved popular on television, and plans were made to bring it to the printed page. Roger Price, the show's creator and principle writer, was not slow off the



*LOOK-IN Catweazle* (1972) - B/w artwork by John Stokes

mark in producing comic strip scripts for John, Carol, Stephen and Kenny, and just as *Season One* was concluding transmission, the *Tomorrow People* appeared on the front cover to promote their own new two page strip. The stylish and dynamic artwork from John Burns was split over two pages, the first printed in colour and the second in black and white. With Price in control, good continuity with the television itself was assured. Of these early storylines, a large number were to be reused by Price elsewhere. His 1974 collection of short stories, *Three Into Three*, used a storyline from the end of the year, whilst the 1975 offering *Four Into Three* was simply adaptations of the first, third and fourth storylines. One of these narratives, originally printed in Issues 45 to 49, actually evolved into a *Season Six* two part story called *A Much Needed Holiday*, shown in 1977.



*LOOK-IN The Tomorrow People* (1974) - B/w artwork by John Burns

Carol and Kenny were phased out of the strip in Issue 5 of the 1974 volume, so that the next storyline could feature the line-up of John, Stephen and Elizabeth – running parallel with Elizabeth "breaking out" to join at the start of *Season Two* on television. As the season finished on air, the strip was relegated to black and white status in the comic, allowing more topical shows to have the colour pages. One of the storylines during the year concerned the possibility of time travel – something Price had dabbled with on TV in *A Rift in Time* – and again the problems of altering history were dealt with in this case showing a scenario in which the Third Reich never fell. More time travel featured in the next rather longer storyline in which John discovered that he has a brother called Colin who is an astronaut in suspended animation heading away from Earth to explore another solar system. As with the TV series, some of Price's plots were becoming increasingly unlikely even at this stage. When Colin's ship collided with an alien vessel, the *Tomorrow People* joined to Kadak Spaceport to rescue him, but their rescue trip landed them in the fourteenth century. Other strips on offer from *LOOK-IN* that year included the western martial arts show *Kung Fu* by Martin Ashby, Noble on *The Adventures of Black Beauty* (a natural replacement for *Follyfoot*), and John Cooper as *Doctor at Sea*. *June's LOOK-IN SUMMER EXTRA* included a shortened version of one of the best Noble *Timeslip* strips from 1971, unfortunately reprinted in black-and-white only.

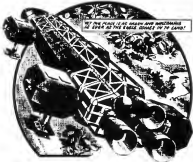
## JAUNTING INTO ACTION

During 1975, *The Tomorrow People* was to become one of the longest running comic strips in *LOOK-IN*. Season Three introduced the gypsy boy Tyne Bonwell, and the strip had to take this into account. In tandem with the debut of Season Three on ITV, Burns' strip was restored to two colour pages, but with the Season Two line-up. Towards the end of the season, Tyne was introduced in Issue 16 (12th April 1975). Over this year, it seemed as if Price was running out of ideas. Plots such as retreating explorative spacejets, holidays upset by freak weather conditions and the arrival on Earth of toothsome alien had already appeared before. The alternative was the more unlikely plots, such as an electronics expert creating a totally incompetent robot gorilla to kidnap one of his ex-colleagues. With Issue 38 (13th September 1975) and the series off-air, *The Tomorrow People* was relegated to black and white status mid-storyline, with Burns being transferred to a new SF project for the comic: *Noble*, now first of *Black Beauty*, took over the adventures of *Nemo Superior* on an irregular basis, with Burns contributing one more three part story that year.

The new series demanding Burns' attention was Gerry Anderson's lavish moon odyssey of *SPACE:1999*. In production since November 1973, this big budget TV series debuted in a haphazard manner in the first week of September 1975. The tie-in comic strip from *LOOK-IN* began in Issue 38 (13th September 1975) with two colour pages drawn by Burns. The storylines were plotted by Angus Allan, who was very much at home with the worlds of Gerry and Sylvia Anderson. The first storylines actually returned the inhabitants of Moonbase Alpha on the wandering moon back to Earth, but an Earth of thousands of years in the future where the sets had taken over. The breath and colourful artwork of Burns continued on the strip into the new year, by which time several ITV regions had dropped the series, and the future of *SPACE:1999* was hovering in the balance. At this time, Allan was also writing the strips for *The Six Million Dollar Man*, drawn by Asbury.

## FAREWELL TO FENNEL

Line-up changes came to *LOOK-IN* at the start of 1976, a year after Fennell had departed as editor and moved to World Distributors. In his place, Colin Shelbourne was promoted from art editor to overall editor - a post he would hold to the early Nineties. *SPACE:1999*'s steady status on ITV weakened its profile, whilst in February Season Four of *THE TOMORROW PEOPLE* was networked. Because of this, the two strips based on the shows swapped pages and artists with Issue 6 (31st January 1976). Noble took over monochrome chores on Moonbase Alpha, whilst Burns crafted a visually impressive six issue strip to introduce Mike Bell, the new Tomorrow Person. Mike, played by Mike Hoolaway of Pinelock, was to become a much-byped teen idol in the UK, and in fact he and Pinelock would later gain their own strip in *LOOK-IN*. Price's plots again used elements such as (time travel), Nazis, alien visitations and misanthropism, and with Season Four's short run of only seven episodes, it was decided to end the strip in *LOOK-IN* for the first time in three years. Issue 32 (31st July 1976) concluded a storyline about a professor who had accidentally shrunk himself, and Burns moved on to draw *The Bionic Woman*.



*LOOK-IN: Space 1999 (1976) - B/W artwork by Mike Noble*

## AMERICA: 1975

November 1975 saw the release of two *SPACE:1999* titles from Chilton Magazines in America, both called *Space:1999* and both edited by George Widman. The first of these was a colour comic book containing one or two stories each issue - the first of which was an adaptation of *Breakaway* under the title *Moonbase Night*, written by Nicole Cui (a man despite the spelling of the name) and with art by Joe Stanton, John Byrne, a highly collectable British artist working in America, handled some of the later issues and gave the adventures an exciting and slightly larger-than-life appearance. Issue 7 the following year heralded the season two format with an adaptation of *The Metamorph* by Mike Pelowski and art from Pat Boyette. The other title was a black-and-white effort from more or less the same team but would include about four serials per issue and lost articles. Principle artist was the art editor Grey Morrow who delivered material with sketchy likenesses and somewhat heavy on the hardware side. Vicente Alcega produced some beautiful strips with very photographic likenesses, prime examples being *E Pluribus Unum* and *The Mind of the Shark* in Issue 2 (January 1976).



Adolfo Buylle also contributed some strips in his uniquely caricatured style. Generally the stories in both publications were of a more thoughtful and cerebral nature than their British counterparts, although quite far removed from the TV series and taking the same artistic standards. The principle characters to feature were Koenig, Helena, Bergman and Carter (who looked nothing like Nick Tate) and often Superdroids would be erroneously drawn as Eagles. The colour comic ran to seven issues - the black and white magazine one issue longer - both ending in Autumn 1976.

Noble's excellent ability to capture likenesses and to frame swelling action helped *Space:1999* survive through its black and white summer. Allan's storylines again retained the Alpha to Earth when Commander Koenig, Dr. Helena Russell and Professor Bergman set off on a suicide mission to stop the Moon passing through a black sun. This time, it was as Earth of the past they found, dominated by primitive men. The following strip introduced a rather sparty design of Moonbuggy (unlike those seen in the series) which also became a model kit from Aulin.

The second season of *SPACE:1999* debated on a handful of ITV regions in September 1976 with notable changes in line-up. The main difference was the absence of Professor Victor Bergman to be replaced by the shape-changing Psychon woman, Maya. Maya's first appearance came in Issue 37 (4th September 1975) as the Season Two format was adopted without explanation. Noble's work temporarily concluded on the strip with Issue 45 (30th October 1975) and the following week Burns returned with a short tale that dashed the Alpha's hopes of settlement on the planet Lepus published in the previous Noble storyline. Noble then returned in Issue 49 (27th November 1975) for yet another return to Earth, this time in 2154 AD where the planet was ruled by the robotic Cytheras.

*SPACE:1999* concluded its comic strip life in *LOOK-IN* with Issue 13 of the 1977 Volume (26th March 1977) which was about the time that ITV

regions should have concluded the second season. Unfortunately, the few ITV regions who had stayed the course had decided to hold back the last few episodes to form a special season in the late Summer of 1977. The final serial was truncated at the last minute and ended three issues early, replaced by *Just William* drawn by Arthur Ranson. Anderson's contest in *LOOK-IN* was not dead, since in Issue 2 (8th January 1977), Gerry Anderson was given his own column called *The Worlds of Gerry Anderson*, and a new half-page strip called *Starcrasher* was launched. This item, drawn by David Jefferies, at first studied the workings of the spaceship, before embarking on some space opera style adventures. *Starcrasher* was purely a merchandise concept, although had the colouring posters and model kits issued in conjunction with it taken off no doubt a series could have been created. *Starcrasher* ran through to Issue 23 of the 1979 Volume (2nd June 1979). Boosted partly by *Space City: The Worlds of Gerry Anderson*, an exhibition that opened in Blackpool around July 1977, the actual column survived through a year or so and vanished after Issue 34 of the 1978 Volume.

## IT'S FUN TO READ AS YOU HEAR!

In a desperate attempt to woo the children of Seventies America away from the cathode ray screen and back to the world of literature, Power Records came up with a rather half-hearted cash-in in 1978 using popular TV shows and a variety of dreadful LPs that they had already recorded. Joining Planet of the Apes, Batman and the like was *Space 1999* with both TV adaptations and original stories acted out on record by a new American cast. But now came the twist - to take some of these stories and release them with a comic book to get the kids listening and following the words! The artwork was reasonable if a little basic, and the two seven inch records for the Anderson's series were *Breakaway* and *Return to the Beginning*, with Nash as a guest star!



## THE PRICE IS RIGHT

After a six month break, *The Tomorrow People* returned with Issue 9 (26th February 1977) to coincide exactly with the start of Season Six on ITV. The line-up had changed to bring that of John, Elizabeth and the increasingly popular Mike, but Price's stories remained firmly rooted in mysterious aliens, freak weather conditions and the like. Now printed as a two page black and white strip, the first of the new storylines was illustrated by Bill Ticerbe, who whilst excellent for his sketchy caricatures on *Doctor on the Go*, *Benny Hill* and other comedy strips, was not the sort of artist well suited to serious (or even semi-serious) SF adventure. Luckily, Noble returned to *The Tomorrow People* from Issue 14 (2nd April 1977) just as Season Six was concluding its run. One very enjoyable storyline was



LOOK-IN: *The Tomorrow People* (1976) - Six artwork by Mike Noble

another time travel serial, with a man fleeing from London 2065 and ending in Hyde Park 1977 to warn of the Earth's future destruction from a greasily experiment. When the authorities fail to heed the warnings of doom from "Project Bazaar", Mike jumped through time to 2064 to find the public hiding in shelters as giant ants roamed around London. The year was even to end with a humorous story in the Christmas spirit as the *Tomorrow People* took a Sleigh Struck Rocket to bring Santa Claus to the Galactic Trip. During the summer, *LOOK-IN SUMMER EXTRA* featured a short story drawn by Leslie Branson of some rather low-key escapades with an alien at a seaside town. Less stylish than the work of Noble, Branson's previous work had included Leslie Crowther for *TV TOYLAND* and *Royal's Rangers* for *SCORCHER* as well as material for *TV ACTION*.

*The Tomorrow People* strip ended its run in Issue 14 of the 1978 volume (2nd April 1978), just where interest in SF was swinging up again because of *STAR WARS*. The gap between transmission of Seasons Five and Six had clearly been a problem, added to which the hype over *Flashback* was dying down. The last serials again contained familiar elements and the final six part storylines was illustrated by Branson, with Noble moving on to grace *The Famous Five* and *The Max from Atlantis* with his superb ability to capture likenesses. *The Tomorrow People* did feature that year in July *LOOK-IN SUMMER EXTRA* which included a re-printed six page black and white reprint of the first *LOOK-IN* strip.

Originally planned by its creator PJ Hammond as a children's serial, *SAPPHIRE & STEEL* made its television debut on 10th July 1979. *LOOK-IN* was very keen to promote the new series with features, pin-ups and cover artwork, notably in Issue 29 (14th July 1979). Just as the technicians' series pulled the plugs on ITV transmissions a few episodes into the second television serial, *Sapphire & Steel* made its first appearance in *LOOK-IN* Issue 33 (11th August 1979) as one of the best scripted, most beautifully coloured, atmospheric and well drawn TV based strips ever. The artwork by Arthur Ranson (who had been handling *Worlds Gussiedge* and *CHIPS*) had a near photographic quality to it (particularly with his likenesses of David McCulloch and Joanna Lumley), which - added the imaginative layout - made each colour two page spread a real gem. The storylines (possibly by Hammond himself) were sinister and very true to the spirit of the series: a deaf and dumb girl possessed by a Victorian necklace, a stage magician who compared up an Egyptian god; a search for a boy from 1980 suddenly flung back into London 1866. The strip was a true gem of British comics.

## HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN

Regenerated into the form of Tom Baker by an explanatory text item entitled *The Changing Face of Doctor Who*, the fourth incarnation of Doctor Who embarked upon his first adventure in *TV COMIC* Issue 1204 (11th January 1975) just a couple of weeks after his debut in *Robot*. Gerry Haylock's *Death Flower* strip also introduced the Doctor's companion Sarah Jane Smith (played by Elisabeth Sladen) who had joined the series in 1973. Haylock's likeness of Baker was not as successful as his work on Portwine's features, and so he left after *Death Flower*. His replacement for two serials was Martin Ashby, whose attention to continuity with the TV series was good. His first story, *Return of the Daleks*, had many references to the Time Lords and showed the race as they had appeared in *The Three Doctors*. His second strip, *The Wreckers*, saw the return of the Vogan, whom the Doctor had fought before on the printed page during his *Countdown* days. With Issue 1232 (26th July 1975), Doctor Who was again drawn by John Canning, who would work on it to the end of its Polyteyle life. The Time Lord's entry in the summer's *TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL* was a text story *The Magic Boat*.

Doctor Who continued to thrive during 1976 as Tom Baker's tenure as an increasingly erratic time traveller took the show to even greater heights of popularity. Canning's first serial of the year, *The Dalek Revenge*, saw the Doctor again pitted against his long-running foe. Two other strips, *Virus* and *Hunter's Potty* (as titles have been assigned to them) are also worthy of praise. The former had a particularly fascinating script premise in which an inability for alien races to communicate with each other almost causes a disastrous epidemic. The latter was an example of Canning's fine use of the airbrush, with his art during this period not as burned as it would later become. The *TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL* that year included a text story accompanied by photographs of the Doctor, Sarah Jane Smith and the Daleks.

Appealing to a younger market and in the face of stiff competition from *LOOK-IN*, Polyteyle's relaunched *TV COMIC* as *MIGHTY TV COMIC* with Issue 1291 (18th September 1976). *MIGHTY TV COMIC* was printed on generally lower quality paper and presented in a larger tabloid format like a newspaper. This was also a cunning ploy which meant that the amount of artwork per issue could be reduced, simply by printing the same material larger. Much emphasis was placed on syndicated or cartoon material which was quicker to draw, and *Star Trek* now turned up in the form of low



quality reports from the American Old Key title. All is all - it was terrible. Doctor Who was reduced to a single page, with Canning now producing serials that had the Doctor travelling on his own, including a story in which the Doctor again faced being put on trial by his own people. Sarah Jane Smith returned without explanation for one serial from Issue 1305 (25th December 1976), with the same story heralding the appearance of the Edwardian TARDIS control room seen in *The Masque of Mandragora* back in September.

## FREE FOR ALL

As free gifts for the first two issues of **MIGHTY TV COMIC**, a **MIGHTY MIDGET** comic of reprint material was given away in sheet form, which the young readers could cut, fold and staple into a miniature comic. The first of these was for **DOCTOR WHO**, and incorporated *Doomcloud* and *The Daleks* (both from the 1974 Polystyle Special). The former which originally featured Pertwee's Doctor, Sarah Jane Smith and Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart was redrawn and rewritten to show the Baker Doctor, an assistant called Joan Brown and General Maxwell-Lewis (with speculac, without monstache).

Back at **MIGHTY TV COMIC**, the adventures of Doctor Who continued in their new large format courtesy of Canning and writer Geoff Cowan, under the editorial guidance of Robin Tatchell - the man behind the relaunch. The start of 1977 had introduced a new companion in the television series, Leela - the alien business played by Louise Jameson. Leela was to make her debut in Issue 1334 (9th July 1977) after a few photographs of her had appeared in Issue 1329 (4th June 1977) - just about the time that the comic shrank again from 20 pages to 16 pages. From Issue 1326 (14th May 1977), the single large page was again filled by two half-size pages of artwork - also to how the strip had appeared in the old **TV COMIC**. Indeed, that was an indication of how Tatchell was about to reverse his relaunch decision. Before the revamp came, the **MIGHTY TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL** for 1977 included a Doctor Who strip called *The Sky Warrior* from Cowan and Canning.

Issue 1353 (15th November 1977) saw Polystyle's principle publication revert to the title of **TV COMIC** and regain its former proportions - although with now only 16 pages. 'Comic' strips were still the staple ingredients, including *Alejo Banz*, *The Pink Panther*, *Red Hail* and *Euro* and *Tom & Jerry*. The reprint of *Star Trek* battled on alongside the *Ten* Lord. The first of the new strips, *The Aquas-City*, saw the departure of Leela in Issue 1360 (7th January 1978), a few weeks prior to the bar decision to remain on Gullifrey at the end of the fifteenth TV season.

As a sign of what was around the corner for **TV COMIC**, Polystyle issued a **DOCTOR WHO WINTER SPECIAL** in November 1977, which consisted of re-edited Haylock strips from **TV ACTION**. Four of the 'Big Story's were chosen and Canning painted Tom Baker's dark curly locks and features over the more detailed original material. The editors lacked the features and photographs of the Pertwee specials of days gone by.

## SICK AS A PARROT

Polystyle were having problems during 1978 as production of **TV COMIC** became slipperier and slipperier. Canning and Cowan produced five more new storylines for Doctor Who, one of which was actually allocated two different titles, *Guardian of the Tomb* and *The Living Mummy*, a sure sign that things were hurried. The Doctor travelled on alone in the new stories until Issue 1385 (30th June 1978) in which Canning did his last page of new artwork. Starting with Issue 1356 (7th July 1978), the Doctor who stepped out of the TARDIS had Baker's head and scarf, but also sported a pair of buggy trousers more usually associated with Patrick Troughton. Soon afterwards he was fighting a group of Quarks in a doctored reprint of a 1968 **TV COMIC** strip. The reprints continued, although thankfully Canning was now adapting stories drawn by Haylock from the 1973/4 period of **TV COMIC**, replacing Pertwee's features with Baker's in an effort to save time and money. **TV COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL** that summer included a suitably modified version of the **TV ACTION** 'Big Story' *The Unheard Voice*.

During April 1978, Polystyle had launched a new title, **TARGET**, to tie in with a BBC police show that had debuted in September 1977. The idea was that the new comic, apparently edited by Dennis Hooper, would showcase action and crime series in a more adult version of **TV COMIC** - although the production standards were far lower (notably the rough quality paper and minimal colour printing). The strips featured included *Charlie's Angels* (by Canning), *Cannon*, *Kojak*, *Itself* (by Brian Lewis) and the *SWINGING*-class, *Target*. Neither **TV** nor comic versions of **TARGET** caught on, and after a relatively short run it was decided to merge **TARGET** into **TV COMIC** and was renamed **TV COMIC** with **TARGET** at Issue 1393 (25th August 1978). After seven weeks, *Target* had been fully absorbed into the title, which was still churning out the **TV COMIC** reprint material for Doctor Who.



**TV COMIC** with **TARGET**: Doctor Who (1978) - Edited by John Canning

In 1979, Doctor Who entered its last few months with Polystyle, still with Canning painting Tom Baker's features over Haylock's likenesses of Joe Farrow. It seems that a probably reason for the general decline of Doctor Who in **TV COMIC** was the rumour that the BBC had plans to return the rights and that BBC Enterprises were to launch their own children's title to grab the equivalent market of *LOOK-IN*. Although Brian Bolland (of 2000 AD fame) was approached regarding Doctor Who and a **STARSKY AND HUTCH** strip mooted to Dave Gibbons, no work was ever done on the comic. Doctor Who ended in Issue 1430 (12th May 1979). The title was never to regain any new British telefantasy strips now the TARDIS had gone to materialise elsewhere, save for a few Catweble reprints in its twilight months of early 1984.

In its later years, **TV COMIC** was prepared to reprint any material rather than produce new strips. Despite having been off the air for over a decade, *Kew Dolly's Diddymen* found itself reprinted along with *Laurel and Hardy*, *Basil Brush* (again, well past his sell-by date) and *Bugs Bunny*. New TV based strips included *Tales of the Gold Monkey* and *Battle of the Planets* (drawn some of the time by Keith Watson), with *The A-Team* being a shrewd acquisition by Polystyle that failed to stop the title going under for the last time. **TV COMIC** closed up over thirty years of publishing and finally ended with Issue 1497 (25th June 1984).

## HOUSES OF HAMMER HORROR

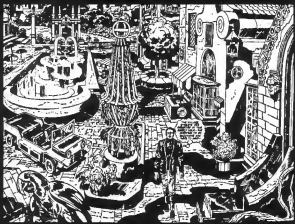
An important if short-lived magazine which spanned a variety of titles began in 1976 under the title **THE HOUSE OF HAMMER**. A bi-monthly



**THE HOUSE OF HAMMER**: The Quatermass Experiment (1976) - Black and white artwork by Brian Lewis

## THE PRISONER UNRELEASED

In 1976, the American firm of Marvel Comics decided to embark upon a new monthly comic book based on **THE PRISONER**, following a suggestion from editor Merv Wolfman - a fan of the series. Originally Wolfman and artist Gene Colan were to produce both episode adaptations and original stories about Number 6, but when Wolfman was busy, Steve Englehart took over the scripting and Gil Kane took over the art. Kane's work was rejected at the pencil stage by Stan Lee, and the material was abandoned - a shame since the first splashpage (later inked by Steve Leialoha) showing Number 6 driving through the streets of London was quite stylish. Instead, the project was given to legendary Marvel artist Jack Kirby who was told to develop an adaptation of half of the first episode, with inking by Mike Royer. After five pages had been completed, Lee halted the project as it was too remote from the Marvel Comics universe. Although crudely inked, the bold artwork successfully projected McGoonan's vision into the Marvel style, with Kirby using the Darren Nesbitt's Number 2 (from *It's Your Funeral*) in his strip.



publication from General Book Distributors, it saw the introduction of a format that would marry comic strips with features on films and TV, with the emphasis on Hammer Films. The creation of *Doc Skins*, the title saw some top strip artists brought in to adapt classic Hammer Films whilst a number of film bulls contributed articles, collecting tips and reviews.

The first telefantasy related item in *THE HOUSE OF HAMMER* came in issue 8 (October 1977). Nigel Kneale's 1953 serial *THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT* had been adapted by Hammer Films into a movie in 1955, and this was now turned into a stylish comic strip by Brian Lewis over two issues.

*THE HOUSE OF HAMMER* was monthly again in 1978 when taken over by Top Sellers, and with issue 19 (April 1978) adopted the more general title of *HAMMER'S HOUSE OF HORROR*, then becoming *HAMMER'S HALLS OF HORROR* at issue 21 (June 1978). The last issue of *HAMMER'S HALLS OF HORROR*, issue 23 (August 1978), included a comic strip based on *QUATERMASS 2*, the movie version of Kneale's 1955 TV serial *QUATERMASS II* under its American title of *Enemy from Space*, with some very steady artwork from David Lloyd. By this time, SK magazine called *STARBURST*, and his work on this title meant a prolonged rest for the *Hammer* title.



**DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY** Doctor Who (1978) - Black and white artwork by Dave Gibbons

## WHO GOES WEEKLY

17th October 1979 saw the release of an important new comic from Marvel Comics Ltd. This was *DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY*, the result of a meeting between Doc Skins of Marvel with producer Graham Williams at the 1979 Fantasy Film Convention. Skins had seen a refinement of his *HAMMER HOUSE OF HORROR* concept in *STARBURST*, an SF/fantasy magazine with heavy TV and film content taken over by Marvel Comics in 1978 and was proving to be the most successful in the aftermath of *STAR WARS*. Now Skins proposed a comic akin to Marvel's *PLANET OF THE APES* and *STAR WARS*, UK titles in which new comic strip adventures would appear alongside reprint back-up material and with various features about the programme itself. With Skins as editor, the first choice of artist for the main strip was Paul Neary, with Neary's pencil work then to be inked by Dave Gibbons - at that time best known for his work on *2000 AD*. Gibbons proved to be extremely enthusiastic about the project, and asked if he could provide all the artwork. The writing team behind the main strip would be Patrick Mills and John Wagner, both known to Gibbons from *2000 AD*, with Mills later submitting an unused script entitled *Space Whale* to the *DOCTOR WHO* production office. At this time, Mills and Wagner did not actually write together, and the author of each strip was the first credited on each occasion. Wagner wrote the *City of the Damned*, an extension of some of his *Judge Dredd* material in *2000 AD*. Gibbons' artwork was dynamic, bold, exciting and - and captured a genuine feeling for Baker's eccentric Doctor. Each principle story ran to eight issues of four pages each, plus a splash panel for the first and fifth issues (where the serial would be split in two for the US reprint market).

A back-up strip of four pages was also required for the end of the comic, and Skins decided that this should feature monsters from the series. The team to tackle this came from *HULLY WEEKLY* and consisted of writer Steve Moore (of *Nick Fury*) with Neary, David Lloyd (of *Night Raven*) and Steve Dillon (also of *Nick Fury*) alternating on the art chores. For 16 year old Dillon, *Throneback - The Son of a Cyberman* in issue 5 (14th November 1979) was his first published UK work, in which his bold shading made an exciting and poignant serial.

The text material in this twenty-eight page comic covered monsters in the series (initially by Ian Gordon Brown) and a series of articles in which *DOCTOR WHO* historian, Jeremy Bentham, retold the early William Hartnell serials in synopsis form. Reel-down transfers were offered as a free gift in the first four issues and the first reprint back-up strip was H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* which ran to the end of the year.



HAMMER'S HALLS OF HORROR: Enemy from Space (1978) - David Lloyd

## 1980 - 1984

### WEAK WEEKLY

Carried along by high viewing figures DOCTOR WHO, DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY had a healthy run into the early months of 1980. However, the television run was curtailed six weeks early with the cancellation of the strike-hit *Shade*, and so the dip in the comic's popularity came earlier than expected. A reprint adaptation of *The Invisible Man* was the next item pinned off under the banner *Tales from the TARDIS* from issue 12 (2nd January 1980), followed by *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The First Men in the Moon*.

Prime interest though was levelled at the main strip, with the first new story being a two episode Gill-in by Neary and Skinn whilst Gibbons took a holiday. Skinn's storyline for *Interlopers* introduced the robot dog K.9 alongside the Doctor, and dealt with time to flowing backwards for the Doctor. This plot device allowed Neary to deliver superb photographic referenced likenesses of not only Tom Baker's Doctor, but also versions of the Hartnell, Troughton and Pertwee Doctors, with the Hartnell Doctor carrying the bulk of the concluding issue. Many readers had wanted to know why the Doctor wasn't travelling with companions as on television. So for *Doctor Who* and the *Star Beast* which began in issue 19 (20th February 1980), Pat Mills devised a new companion in the form of Sharon, a schoolgirl from Northern England whom he aimed to defy clichés by making female, black and very smart. UNIT also turned up in this serial. Towards the back of the comic, Dillan and Lloyd continued to shun one on monster storylines from Steve Moore. Moore, who disliked being boxed by elements of the TV series, set out to create a new comic hero in *Abolish Dusk*... *Dalek-Killer*, a beautiful strip illustrated by Dillan from issue 17 (6th February 1979). A convicted murderer from the 25th century, Dusk took to become a suicidal Dalek-Killer rather than face execution, but found a reason for living again when he rescued the Princess Talyin from the Daleks. In the closing frames, a Dalek killed Talyin who died in Dusk's arms. Dusk was to become extremely popular with both publishers and readers.



DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY: Doctor Who (1980) - B/W artwork by Dave Gibbons

From issue 23 (19th March 1980), Neary took over as editor, assisted on the features side by sub-editor Alan McKenzie. With sales on the decline, Neary reformatted the comic, making it punchier for the schoolchild market. At this point, Bentham's history of the show was revamped into a hard text story, and from issue 26 (9th April 1980) was dropped in favour of a text story written by associate editor Jenny O'Connor. The relaunch of issue 28 also saw readers getting a chance to join UNIT and receiving a code-book with which to crack weekly messages in the comic. Feature material was reduced to a minimum.

The final Mills/Wagner storyline was *Doctor Who and the Dogs of Doom* for which the Daleks made their debut in the main strip. Since the length of the weekly instalments was to be reduced to three pages, both writers lost interest and moved onto other projects. Because of this, Steve Moore

was promoted to write the main strip with Doctor Who and the Time Witch (in which a freak time warp makes Sharon age into a young woman) from issue 35 (12th June 1980) and the Sontaran strip *Dragon's Claw*. At the back of the comic, Alan Moore took over some of the writing chores, Janitor Cyberleader Kroton from the *Throbbin'*... made a return, as did Abolish Dusk in *Star Tigers*. One instalment off the end of this strip, Dillan was lured away to work on 2000 AD by IPC, and the serial was completed by Lloyd, who now handled the monster strips alone.

From issue 30 (7th May 1980), the SF reprints degenerated into *Dr Who's Time Teller* with the Doctor's face introducing badly-drawn one-offs. At the same time, the colour photographic covers were replaced by artwork. The text stories ended their run, and in issue 33 (28th May 1980), *The Daleks* Tapes began - poor quality reprints of edited TV CENTURY 21 strips. June saw Marvel's first DOCTOR WHO special, DOCTOR WHO SUMMER SPECIAL which comprised low quality reprints of articles and a couple of strip stories.

### A CHANGE OF PACE

Flagging sales of during the summer of 1980 caused Marvel to rethink the use of their BBC licence. A new producer on DOCTOR WHO, John Nathan-Turner, was keen that the series should have a higher profile. From issue 37 (26th June 1980), the photographic features started to reappear, with Bentham's synopsis returning in issue 40 (17th July 1980). Gradually coverage of the programme was built up again.

The relaunch as DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY came with issue 44 in September 1980. Neary remained as editor with McKenzie handling the features, which were to play an increasingly important role. The target audience was now the more dedicated viewer or casual fan, as opposed to the general schoolchild. Back-up strips set related to the programme were dropped, and there were now only two comic strips: the main Doctor Who strip written by Steve Moore and illustrated by Gibbons, and a variety of secondary strips featuring the return of Abolish Dusk and the start of a trilogy of strips about early Time Lords written by Alan Moore. The continuation of *Star Tigers* strip saw Dusk and the Draconian Salander being joined by an Ice Warrior wrestler called Harma and Mercenary, an old rival of Dusk's. Mercenary's introduction in issue 45 (October 1980) saw the new character's castle surrounded by the robotic Kll-Mechs. Originally these were supposed to be Daleks, but there was a rumour around that Terry Nation was about to withdraw the rights for his creations' use in the Marvel strips. Luckily this was unfounded, allowing Dusk's Kll-Wagon team to lay into the Daleks in issue 46 (November 1980).

### U.S. PREMIERE

With their UK DOCTOR WHO title having run for a year, Marvel decided to test the water stateside where the show was gathering a growing audience in syndication. The first two stories from DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY were re-edited and reprinted in a colour in MARVEL PREMIERE, a bimonthly comic used to introduce possible new titles. The magazine was generally of a low standard, new artwork covers were drawn by the likes of Miller and Austin, Gena Day and Earl Norem, with aficionado Mary Jo Duffy penning some basic articles about DOCTOR WHO.

Four issues contained Doctor Who starting with issue 57 (December 1980), during which the serial *City of the Damned* had to be reedited *City of the Cursed* due to US censorship laws.





DOCTOR WHO MONTHLY: Doctor Who (1982) - by Dave Gibbons

work included Black Knight and Night Ravens in *HULK COMICS*. In Issue 58 (September 1981), the Doctor encountered the character of slave SF author Dr. Ivan Asimov and also got involved with the team of the Free-Fall Warriors - characters created by Parkhouse who would feature in their own strips.

The back-up strips would often be dropped for odd issues, but when they appeared were depicted in the bold strokes of David Lloyd, the detailed shading of John Stokes, the caricatured graphics of Mike McMahon or the artist pencils of Mick Austin (a colleague of Neary's who had worked with him doing *Timesaver* for Marvel's *RAMPAGE MONTHLY*). *Voyage to the Edge of the Universe* featured the Demons, whose spaceship was identical to that in a strip from *THE DR WHO ANNUAL 1974* in which an unnamed slice race identical to the Demons had appeared. Joining the writing team was John Peel, a long-time *DOCTOR WHO* follower who had worked extensively in fan fiction and would later adapt teleplays and write novels from the series. With *DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY* Issue 53 (July 1982), reprints of *The Daleks from TV CENTURY 21* started again, with the strip transferring to the back page from Issue 56 to appear in full colour, the title block of the reprints redrawn by David Lloyd. *THE VERY BEST OF DOCTOR WHO* was a special issue in June 1981, in which McKenzie presented a series of reprint material from *DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY* and *DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY*.

The final comic strip of the year is *DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY* was not drawn by Gibbons, who was on holiday. Gibbons suggested his old friend Mike Mahon to do the initial pencil work, with the ink then supplied by Neary's friend Adolfo Baytla. *Just-Yard Demons* was a very graphic and caricatured approach which upset some readers as it unfolded a tale of how the Doctor confronted an ancient Cyberman - based on those from *The Tenth Planet*. Mahon's previous work included *Judge Dredd* for 2000AD and he would develop *Slime* for the same comic. The first special issue to contain "original material" as opposed to reprints was issued in December 1981. *DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL WINTER SPECIAL* showcased a number of articles about stories missing from the BBC Archives along with two comic strips.

## DOCTOR IN CHARGE

*DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY* was relaunched after Issue 60 (January 1983) which included the final Tim Baker strip. The *Neutro Knights* by Parkhouse was a mixture of Arthurian legend and cyberpunk which served as a prelude to Parkhouse's forthcoming magazine reprint - regarded by many as one of the best representations of *DOCTOR WHO* in comic form. From Issue 61 (February 1983) the title became *DOCTOR WHO MONTHLY* and the emphasis shifted to the new incarnation of the Doctor, as played by Peter Davison. Gibbons' artwork continued to capture a good likeness of the new actor as the epic *The Tides of Time* began, showing a Doctor who had stopped travelling and settled down in the English village of Stockbridge. The strip also introduced Sheldy, a Time Lord agent who 'protected' the Doctor and his short-lived companion, a knight called Sir Justin. Stockbridge was also the base for the Doctor in the two subsequent adventures, *Star Fall* on Stockbridge (a satirical interlude about a UFO spotter) and *The Stockbridge Horror*.

After Issue 69 (October 1983), Gibbons was hired away by DC to work on other projects, and would also contribute to *Knight Trooper* in 2000 AD. Parkhouse himself took over the art chores, delivering a more slowly and realistic version of the Davison Doctor in *The Stockbridge Horror*.

The back-up strips were phased out after two more Peel/Stokes stories featuring a Sea Devil and the Demons, ending in Issue 66 (May 1982). Starting that issue was *Doctor Who?*, a 'buzzy' strip by cartoonists Tim Quinn and Dicky Howett. Spoofing the series, the production team, the merchandise, the fans and any other element of *DOCTOR WHO* that could be thought of, the strip became very popular and would later pave the way for two collections of this irreverent humour: *THE DOCTOR WHO FUN BOOK* and *IT'S BIGGER ON THE INSIDE*. *The Daleks* reprints continued on the back page of most issues and concluded with the Mechanoid/Dalek conflict at Issue 68 (September 1983). By now, articles had taken a far firmer grip of the magazine to appeal more to the dedicated fans. John Nathan-Tavner became the adviser and Bantam did a series of articles covering the history of *DOCTOR WHO* comic strips starting in Issue 62 (March 1982). February 1982 saw an oddity reprint in Issue 1 of *STAR LORD - THE SPECIAL EDITION*, a comic collection from Marvel in the US which featured a colourised reprint of *Spider-God* from the previous year.

*DOCTOR WHO - SUMMER SPECIAL* was published in June 1982, and although it mixed features with comic material, the strips were not directly related to *DOCTOR WHO*. The first, *The Fabulous Idiot*, starred Dr Ivan Asimov whilst the second, *A Ship Called Sudden Death*, was about the Free-Fall Warriors. A *DOCTOR WHO - WINTER SPECIAL* appeared in December 1982, but consisted partly of feature material aside from Quinn and Howett's *So You Think You'd Make a Good Companion for Dr Who?*

## NEW WAVE

*DOCTOR WHO MONTHLY* continued its improvement in standards under McKenzie. At the start of the 1983 Jeremy Beckett left as feature writer to be replaced by Richard Landon. Although there were some ups and downs of layout and print quality during the year, the comic storylines from Parkhouse remained as intelligent as ever. However, Parkhouse found the pressure of writing and drawing the strip (on top of assignments such as *Special Plan* for *WARDEN*) too great and asked Paul Neary to work on the art from his drafts. Neary too was very busy (doing *Madness*, also for *WARDEN*) and recommended his old friend Mick Austin (who was also drawing *Madness*). The artwork was generally aided by Neary, with Austin taking over from Issue 73 (February 1983). Regrettably, Austin's first few submissions were rushed and failed to show his work at its best, the result from Parkhouse's reliance to Austin's exaggerated character work was disastrous. The story *Lower Legion* led directly into *4-Dimensional Vortex*, during which Davison's distinctly moody comic strip Doctor teamed up with an American pilot called Gus in a battle against the Molding Monk and the Ice Warriors.



THE DOCTOR WHO FUN BOOK (1987) - B/W artwork by Dicky Howett

measure, there was barely any new material in **DOCTOR WHO - A SUMMER SPECIAL** in June 1983. Instead, McKenzie wrote *Catalogue of Events*, an encounter between the Doctor and the Event Machine, in which the past studied two reprint strips: *Jack Yard Demons* and *Abdullah Deak ... Death-Killer. DOCTOR WHO WINTER SPECIAL - 1983/84* issued in December 1983 contained interviews with all of the producers who had worked on the show. The only comic artwork was a four-page Queen/Queen spoof of *An Unearthly Child*.

The Marvel **DOCTOR WHO** title underwent another revamp at the start of the year. **DOCTOR WHO MONTHLY** ended with issue 84 (January 1984), in which Dillon returned to the publication (as well as doing *Lesser Evils* and *Proclamation* for **WARRIOR**) to deliver some stylish and enjoyable artwork for what would be the final Davies Doctor comic strip: *The Moderator*. This storyline by Parkhouse was very dark indeed, and concerned a mysterious bird by the frog-like villain Josiah W. Dogbolter to kill the Doctor and Gus. The story concluded with Gus perishing.

## DOCTOR WHO - U.S.A.

After the introduction of their **DOCTOR WHO** strip to the American market in **MARVEL PREMIERE** during 1981, Marvel launched further reprints from **DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY** and **DOCTOR WHO MONTHLY** as **DOCTOR WHO** fandom in America was reaching its height. **DOCTOR WHO** debuted with issue 1 dated October 1984 in the form of a thirty-six page full colour monthly comic, offering artwork colourised by comics fan Andy Yanchus. The strips took up most of the comic, with a few basic articles appearing, primarily written by consultant Patrick Daniel O'Neill.

From issue 85 (February 1984) the magazine was relabelled under the rather pompous title of **THE OFFICIAL DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE**. Ladden left as feature writer at short notice, and after an emergency issue written by Richard Holles was replaced primarily by three fan writers: Gary Russell, Richard Marston and David J. Howe. The main problem in the first new issue was a total absence of *The Moderator*, and its replacement with a reprint of *Slyweeth-7*. As a result of this, a new artist was found for Colin Baker's tenure as the Doctor which began in issue 88 (May 1984), a few weeks after the actor had donned the mantle of the Time Lord. The artist was John Ridgway, who had at that time been doing comic work for 2000 AD as well as Young Marvelman for **WARRIOR**. Ridgway's work was very realistic and detailed, but could still capture Parkhouse's surreal humour. The first strip saw the introduction of a new companion for the Doctor, the title character of *The Shape Shifter* a Whiffordall hired by Dogbolter to kill the Doctor. The Whiffordall instead befriended the Doctor, adopting the name of Frohisher and the form of a penguin for the next strip, the epic *Voyagers*. The favourite of all Parkhouse's strips, this revived *The Tides of Time* in popularity as the Doctor entered a surreal and stylish adventure for his first encounter with the Time Lord criminal Astrobloss. Writing and art now hit another peak in the magazine's history.

The first of the thematic **DOCTOR WHO SUMMER SPECIALS** appeared in May 1984, with McKenzie filling an issue with material about the show's merchandise and compiling any comic strip material. A **DOCTOR WHO WINTER SPECIAL** in December 1984 also failed to have any comic material.

## DISTANT EMPIRES

**FANTASY EMPIRE** emerged from the USA in 1961 to celebrate all things British, primarily **DOCTOR WHO**. A jumble of various odds and ends, the low quality magazine spawned various offshoots (e.g. **FANTASY EMPIRE LIMITED**) before meeting its doom in 1965. Taking over as editor from issue 6 was John Peel, a fan writer who had worked on **DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY** prior to emigrating to the USA. Starting with issue 6 (February 1964), Peel wrote Doctor Who *The Marvel Way* in which he explained the backgrounds to his four strips, which were reprinted alongside his text.

## ELEMENTS AND DELTA TIME

Despite the fact that **SAPPHIRE & STEEL** was off air for the whole of 1980, the apparent popularity of the Ransom strip in **LOOK-IN** (plus the knowledge that several other stories had been recorded and were awaiting transcription) maintained the time travelling detectives' adventures in comic form. There was a break over the summer with the strip ending in issue 19 (3rd May 1980) so that Ransom could work on *The Further Adventures of Oliver Twist* before returning to *Sapphire & Steel* in issue 33 (9th August



**LOOK-IN** *Sapphire & Steel* (1980) - Colour artwork by Arthur Ranson

1980). Again, the comic storylines maintained a high standard to match the artwork, particularly with a serial about the spirit of a Victorian mill slave child taking possession of the son of a demonstrator who - in 1960 - was trying to save that same mill from demolition. The yuletide strip in the comic was a sinister festive offering with two children attending a stage performance of *A Christmas Carol* being watched back through time to 1864 where a sorcerer called Zebadiah Cleech was raising demons to make London part of the Devil's domain.

The second season of **SAPPHIRE & STEEL** aired on ITV during January/February 1981, assuring the continued existence of the comic strip until April. The last two comic strips had a distinctly more whimsical flavour to them. The first concerned two children being ensnared by the mythical land of Gnomandyl inhabited by dwarves and elves. The final storyline saw Sapphire and Steel combining nose other than the Pied Piper of Hamelin, as agent for Time who had come to lead all the young followers of a pop group into oblivion after him - thus ending the Human race. The strip concluded in issue 17 (18th April 1981). Ranson continued his associations with TV SF by moving onto *Back Region* in the 25th Century.

**INTO THE LABYRINTH**, a haphazardly scheduled fantasy serial, had already broadcast two seasons starring Ron Moody as the mystic Rodrigo during the summer of 1981. A third, rather lacklustre season that replaced Ron Moody with the comical Chris Harris as the incompetent Laddie had run for seven episodes over July/September 1982. Into the Labyrinth did not begin its comic strip life until after it had actually finished for good on television, making its debut in issue 38 of **LOOK-IN**'s 1982 Volume (18th September 1982). The format was that of Season Three, with Laddie and his young friend Phil trying to gain the Scarsburton from the wicked witch Beke and her stupid sidekick Bram, whilst crossing between time zones in Delta Time. Mike Noble handled the two-page black-and-white strip which ran to a more barren issue before vanishing into the obscurity of comic history at issue 51 (18th December 1982). As usual, Noble's artwork was pleasing, his portrayal of both Pamela Salem's Beke and the historical settings were of particular delight. In the new year, Noble moved onto a strip based on **STAR FLEET**.



**LOOK-IN** *Into The Labyrinth* (1982) - Black and white artwork by Mike Noble



LOOK-IN: TerraHawks (1983) - Colour artwork by Jim Baikie

## RETURN OF THE MASTER

Garry Anderson returned to the arena of TV SF puppetry in September 1983 with TERRAHAWKS which had received a fair bit of publicity in LOOK-IN prior to its launch - particularly in Issue 43 (22nd October 1983). After the show had been on air a couple of months, a companion comic strip appeared in Issue 49 (3rd December 1983), with Jim Baikie handling the two-page colour artwork with quite some style. The plots were nothing spectacular and formed very standard scenarios of Zelds attempting to invade Earth, with one storyline featuring Moor - the Master Of Infinite Disguise - who even managed to impersonate a faulty zerd to lead Dr. Tiger Nostrum into a trap. Baikie left the strip after a few weeks to provide WARRIOR with Twilight World and then join the 2000 AD team. The final storyline introduced the artwork of Steve Kyte. Kyte, a long time fan of Anderson's work and regular contributor to the fanzine SIG, produced some strikingly stylish work so what was a very lacklustre television show, encapsulating some of the graphic feel of Frank Bellamy's artwork with a charming ability to keep the characters identity as puppets. Although two further seasons of TERRAHAWKS were broadcast in Autumn 1984 and Summer 1985, the strip version did not return.

The big new adventure series for 1984 was ROBIN OF SHERWOOD, an exciting and fantasy orientated look at the legends of Robin Hood and his merry men developed by Richard Carpenter. LOOK-IN was not slow off the mark, and Robin of Sherwood made its appearance as a two-page colour comic strip with Issue 18 (20th April 1984) coinciding exactly with the television premiere. The artwork was well handled at first by the ever reliable Mike Noble, and the stories were a variety of plans launched by the Sheriff and Guy of Gisborne to capture Robin Hood, or schemes by Robin and his group to thwart the corrupt authorities. During the summer, Arthur Ransome took over the strip for five issues starting with Issue 35 (25th August 1984), again imbuing it with his photographic style. Towards the end of the year after Noble's return, Robin of Sherwood became a black-and-white strip since the series was off air. The LOOK-IN WINTER SPECIAL also included a Robin of Sherwood text story.

## SUPERMARIONATION SPECIALS

With THUNDERBIRDS being repeated around the ITV region, Polystyle issued the first of their 1980s summer specials based on the series in Summer 1982. THUNDERBIRDS SPECIAL contained a total of five Thunderbirds and Lady Penelope strips reproduced predominantly in black-and-white from COUNTDOWN and a variety of annuals/specials. May 1983 saw another THUNDERBIRDS SPECIAL which contained black-and-white reprints of four strips from COUNTDOWN and TV ACTION + COUNTDOWN. By this time, STINGRAY was also getting another airing so the following month saw STINGRAY SPECIAL, with four black-and-white reprints material from COUNTDOWN. Although the reruns were almost entirely finished by Summer 1984, Polystyle still issued a THUNDERBIRDS HOLIDAY SPECIAL which comprised three stories reprinted from TV CENTURY 21 in a mixture of black-and-white and colour.

## HALLS OF HORROR

Doc Skinn's HAMMER'S HALLS OF HORROR was given a final lease of life and ended its run with seven issues entitled just HALLS OF HORROR after going quarterly from Quality Communications Ltd. The first of the new issues billed as WINTER SPECIAL (Issue 24: Winter 1982) was a reprint 'strip special' including the Lewis version of The Quantum Xperiment. By now, Skinn had moved on to more important landmark projects and the editor was Dave Reeder. After thirty issues, the magazine went to join Skinn's new comic journal, WARRIOR in 1984.

## SEVEN UP

Floated with the success of DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY, Marvel Comics decided to launch BLAKE'S 7 - A MARVEL MONTHLY, this time based on the BBC's other successful SF adventure series. BLAKE'S 7 had been on air since January 1978, and came close to appearing in the spin-off from TV COMIC, TARGET. BLAKE'S 7 had been planned to end with its third season, transmitted in Spring 1980, at the end of which the Liberator, the main spacecraft for the rebels who fought an oppressive Federation of the future, was blown up. The lead character of Roy Blake had also long left the series, passing command to the sadistic computer genius Kerr Avon played by Paul Darrow. BLAKE'S 7 was given a sudden reprieve in 1980, and a fourth season with a revised format was required for the Autumn 1981 season.

BLAKE'S 7 - A MARVEL MONTHLY made its debut a few days before the first episode of Season Four was transmitted, with Issue 1 dated October 1981. Editor Stewart Wales had assembled a generally less challenging line-up than McKenzie's DOCTOR WHO publication, but again mixed interviews, strips and behind the scenes reports. The original artist on the comic strip, Ian Kennedy, created some excellent layouts, but the features of some of the regular characters proved evasive - although his attention to detail on the hardware was stunning. An initial strip painted by Kennedy was never run, but was used in some promotional material by Marvel and showed a sequence of the ruthless President Servetus standing in the pained bulk of the Liberator. Kennedy came to Marvel from IPC where he had worked on TRUE WAR and drawn Timequake and Ro-Busters for STARLORD.



BLAKE'S 7 - A MARVEL MONTHLY: Blake's 7 (1982) - artwork Ian Kennedy

Along with the strips from Kennedy came Ask Orrer in which readers asked the show's resident computer questions, Blake's 7 Scrapbook which showcased photographs (reproduced very badly), plus games, puzzles and Vile's Grog (the excuse to reproduce any cheap SF cartoons). The strip stories were faithful to the series format, but were restricted in length space apart from the first issue and a two-part storyline later on, the narrative only had eight pages in which to develop.

The big problem for the magazine was that on 21st December 1981, more or less concurrent with its fourth issue, BLAKE'S 7 ended in one of the biggest shoot-outs ever in which all the heroes - with the possible exception of Avon - were gunned down, and with Blake himself having had his stomach shot out by Avon. At this point, Marvel had been on the verge of taking on fan writers to increase the factual content of the magazine, but since the first such set visit coincided with the magazine's sequence this idea was abandoned. Most of the feature material was written by Ken Armstrong, a photographer who covered Season Four's production and who eventually became consultant editor on the publication.

## COMIC WITHOUT A SERIES

Aside from the problem of its parent series being killed, another problem for BLAKE'S 7 - A MARVEL MONTHLY was that Kennedy was involved in a serious road accident and was to take some time to recover. Because

this, a variety of other artists, many of whom were Marvel in-house staff, were pressed into service. One unidentified artist who did three issues was particularly poor, with dreadful likenesses and generally very scrappy and rushed work. Steve Dillie and Jerry Pans handed strips from Issue 9 (June 1982) onwards and captured very sharp and stylish images. David Lloyd worked on *Alliance* in Issue 13 (October 1982) in his bolder but less detailed style, and after this Mick Austin took over for the rest of the year, with his pencils and paints giving a more caricatured approach.

During Spring 1982, Bernie Ivey was to take over from Wales as editor, and the magazine did see an improvement in content. The enthusiasm of the fans was a boost to the magazine, as was the fact that Paul Darrow was keen to write on various subjects. One of Wales' last assignments was to edit *BLAKE'S 7 - A MARVEL SUMMER SPECIAL* issued in June 1982, mixing reprint items with photographs showing production of the final season. Marvel issued a second special in November 1982, *BLAKE'S 7 - WINTER SPECIAL '82* was a great disappointment, consisting mainly of re-edited material from the magazine. Like the previous special, there was no comic strip.

The death knell was sounded for *BLAKE'S 7 - A MARVEL MONTHLY* during the summer of 1983 when the BBC repeated the final season, and stated that this would be its last ever screening. In May 1983, Marvel announced that the title would cease with Issue 23 - issued with no cover number and referred to as *Collector's Edition*. This was a double-length issue which attempted to conclude all the regular features.

The artist on the strip for the last months of its life was Phil Gwynne, who produced some exciting layouts and good likenesses, but lacked the crisp clarity of Kennedy. The scripts, now written by Armstrong or Paul Neary, were generally unadventurous, even when allocated a two-part serial in Issues 19 and 20 (April/May 1983). Whilst Issues 21 and 22 had no strips, the *Collector's Edition* (August 1983) concluded things very nicely with *The Omen*, in which the Scorpio breaks out of its time slot and *Avon* is visited by a vision of *Blake* (as he appeared in the final television episode, *Blake*) and told that the two of them would meet again soon...

## DAREDEVIL MIXTURE

At the start of 1983, Bernie Ivey also found herself editing another monthly Marvel title: *THE DAREDEVILS*. This collection of superheroes included *Captain Britain*, *Spider-Man* and reprints of *Daredevil*. By the issue 6 (June 1983), *MARVEL SUPER-HEROES* was merged into the magazine, which then itself continued until Issue 11 (November 1983) before merging into *MIGHTY WORLD OF MARVEL AND DAREDEVILS*. Tucked away inside all this with no explanation at all as to what they actually were, were the trilogy of Alan Moore stories concerning *Time Lords* from *DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY* (*Star Death*, *4-O War* and *Black Sun Rising*), starting with Issue 5 (May 1983).



DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE: Doctor Who (1986) - Artwork by John Ridgway

## 1985 - 1989

### THROUGH THE DARK VALLEY

Alan McKenzie left *THE OFFICIAL DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE* at the start of the year with Issue 96 (January 1985), with control passing first to group editor Sheila Crans in Issue 97 (February 1985) and then designs man Cefe Ridout in Issue 98 (March 1985) with Ian Rimmer assuming responsibility for the comic strip. Ridout's attempts to popularise the magazine made it appear vacuous, although photographic and editorial content were generally good. The comic strip was also still a strong element, concluding *Polly the Ghot* in Issue 97. This was the second part of the *Autobahn* trilogy, and saw the Doctor again meeting up with Dr. Ivan Ainsworth. Issue 98 saw the start of *Once Upon a Time-Lord ...*, a variation which broke a lot of the comic strip rules to that time and was a fitting conclusion to the Doctor/Autobahn encounters. By now, it seemed that the comic strip form of the Doctor was all that the series' followers would have to look forward to for some time, since in late February 1985 the BBC had announced that the twenty-third season of the series had been suspended and would not air until September 1986 instead of January 1986.

The title changed its name again in April 1985 to *THE DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE* and would become simply *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE* in December 1985. The final *Parishouse* strip concluded, to be replaced by storylines written by Alan McKenzie - sometimes under his 'Maxwell Stockbridge' pen-name (to explain this name - it was used by McKenzie in his *Night Raven* noir stories and hailed from the fact that the character was a parody of *The Shadow* written by Maxwell Grant and *The Spel* written by Grant Stockbridge. Also in *Stars fell* on Stockbridge, a UFO spotter character called Max lived in Stockbridge). McKenzie was now well versed in continuity aspects, folklore and fans' demands regarding *DOCTOR WHO* and so introduced various Draconian characters (from *Frontier in Space*), as well as having Peri finally joining the *TARDIS* crew in Issue 104 (September 1985) to travel alongside the Doctor and Frohisher. Towards the end of the rather uncertain year, Ridout handed the editorial reins back to Crans, who took firm control of the magazine to improve its look and quality. Marvel decided that the *DOCTOR WHO - 1985 SUMMER SPECIAL CLASSIC* should consist of coloured strip reprints in a perfect bound format as opposed to a thematic magazine. November 1985 saw the issue of *THE DOCTOR WHO WINTER SPECIAL*, in which Crans reverted to the 'thematic approach' for a look at the Pertwee era - featuring any comic material.

The standard of the main strip in *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE* had reached a very high level during 1984/5 and maintained this during 1986 as the only stimulus for the average *DOCTOR WHO* fan during the enforced hiatus. Ridgway continued to provide the strips starring the Doctor, Peri and Frohisher, whilst McKenzie moved on to pastures new. New series included *Sinister Farm*, *Jamie Delane* and *Grant Morrison* - all of whom would become quite formidable comic names.

### DAAK TALES FOR BRITAIN

More life was squeezed out of some of the *DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY* back-up strips for a new Marvel title in January 1985. This was *CAPTAIN BRITAIN*, a monthly comic which relaunched the home-grown superhero. Alongside *Captain Britain* and Steve Parish's *Freebird* Westerns were reprints of all the *Abdion Quak* - *Oslek Kilar* (and retitled *Star Tiger*) strips from various issues of *DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY* and *DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY*.

### MAGICAL HISTORY TOUR

McKenzie's final storyline, worked out with Ridgway, featured a new race of Cybermen on the planet *Sylvanor*, with Ridgway drawing himself into one frame of *Realisation* in Issue 108. The remaining strips for the year presented other thoughtful SF adventures (e.g. *Nature of the Beast*) or something quite surreal (e.g. *Sahel Dune*). Quinn and Horner did an occasional one-page 'fanny' called *The Doctor Who History Tour* in which Colin Baker's Doctor took Peri on a trip through famous events in a history and a string of schoolroom history gags. Three test stories illustrated by Ridgway were also printed throughout the year, all winning entries in a short-story competition - and a fourth and final winner was printed in early 1987. Crans's firm control as editor maintained a successful mix of articles. One of her innovations was *Northings*, in which readers were invited to contribute their treasured memories of earlier serials. Her special issues were also geared towards a theme connected with the TV series, with the *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE SUMMER*

**SPECIAL** published in June 1986 covering the historical series in **DOCTOR WHO**. Her **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE WINTER SPECIAL** that came out in November 1986 was a look at the Tom Baker era, again with no comic material. There was also, however, a perfect bound collection of coloured reprint material in September 1986 under the title **DOCTOR WHO COLLECTED COMICS**. This showcased two Ridgway strips from **THE OFFICIAL DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE**.

Although Colin Baker had lost his job as the Doctor in the television version of **DOCTOR WHO** in December 1984, the sixth incarnation's comic strip life was to stretch through to **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE** issue 129 (October 1987). Mike Collins (who had worked on *X-MEN* and *Judge Dredd*) joined the team as a writer in issue 120 (January 1987) to deliver *Profile of Docteur*, after which Delano contributed a suitably wacky storyline for *The Gift* in which a mad scientist creates self-replicating, spookily-legged scavenger robots that over-run an alien city modelled on 1920s Chicago (Delano's last strip before moving onto *HELLBLAZER*). The following strip, *The World Shapers* by Grant Morrison, was one of the most consistently intensive strips ever. The Doctor, Peri and Frohisher arrived on Marisax, a planet from the 1964 serial *The Keys of Marinus* which was also based on that world's appearance in the very first edition of *THE DR WHO ANNUAL*. Over the coming weeks, it was revealed that the native Voord were evolving into Cybermen - and at the same time explaining a very, very minor continuity point regarding Planet 14 from the 1968 serial *The Invasion*. As well as having a grasp of Time Lord outlooks the companion Jamie was re-introduced. It was with this story, and the final instalment of *The Gift*, that Ridgway's art was taken by Tim Perkins, who failed to capture the likeness to previous standards. The

great robotic bounty hunter Death's Head - who appeared in Marv's *TRANSFORMERS* comic and later got a title of his own. Storylines for the year were generally of only one or two issues in length, the exception being the superbly written *Claws of the Klisk!* by Collins, which was not matched by the artwork from Kev Haggood and David Hine. Morrison and Furness both left the strip during the year, Morrison to work on *CUT MAGAZINE* and *ARKHAM ASYLUM* whilst Furness moved onto *Dragon's Claw*, *Death's Head* and *TRANSFORMERS*. After the departure of Ridgway, a number of other artists worked on the strip in rotation. Haggood's art was very sketchy, Geoff Senior's art very stylised (and better suited to his later work on *Dragon's Claw*), Bryan Hitch's very caricatured and indeed of this period, Jon Higgins' work on *Keptake* really stands out. One of the new regular *Doctor Who* artists, Lee Sullivan (who had worked extensively on *TRANSFORMERS*) joined the magazine with issue 141 (October 1988) for the anniversary tale of *Planet of the Dead* by John Freeman, the magazine's new editor since issue 137 (June 1988). This was the magazine's twenty-fifth anniversary strip which featured all seven Doctors, and companions such as Katrina, Sara Kingdom, Jamie and Adric.

Freeman had joined Marvel in late 1988 as a designer, but his enthusiasm for **DOCTOR WHO** and the world of comics meant that within a few months he took over **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE** as editor. Freeman's influence on the strip meant an increase in overall continuity, references to other comic strips and an increased variety. Influences came from different genres, and also Freeman's knowledge of what **DOCTOR WHO** and comics fans wanted meant he could deliver a more comprehensive product. **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE** moved into a new era where it started to read fan based magazines in terms of news, enthusiasm and accuracy. In honour of **DOCTOR WHO**'s twenty-fifth anniversary on 23rd November 1988, Marvel Comics produced a perfect bound retrospective **DOCTOR WHO 25th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL**. This included a piece about the history of the comic strip by Freeman.

## WONDERFUL GIVEAWAYS

The future over the cancellation of **DOCTOR WHO** actually made the public more aware of the series, and merchandise connected with the show increased. During November 1988, a promotion campaign by the crisp manufacturers Golden Wonder saw six different **DOCTOR WHO MARVEL ADVENTURE COMICS** given away in multipacks of savoury snacks. Each issue contained an abridged reprint of one of the John Ridgway strips from **THE OFFICIAL DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE**, now coloured and with certain modifications (such as Peri being deleted from *Revolution*).



*Doctor Who History Tour* continued throughout the year, and would conclude early in 1988. Creators ensured high standards in the rest of the magazine with interviews, set reports and archives. The **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE AUTUMN SPECIAL** in September 1987 was purely devoted to the theme of designs on the television series with no strips.

Sylvester McCoy's version of the Doctor debuted in issue 130 (November 1987) shortly after his appearance on television in September 1987. The first strip, *A Cold Day in Hell*, was written by Furness and drawn by Ridgway, but it soon became clear that Ridgway was having trouble with McCoy's evasive features - as would many other artists who followed him. Peri had vanished from the strip after *The World Shapers*, and at the end of *A Cold Day in Hell*, it was Frohisher's turn to depart. The Doctor travelled on in 1988 with a new companion, a female heat vampire called Olla.

## THE SEVEN DOCTORS

Olla's role as a new companion for the Doctor was short-lived, as her true and unpleasant nature was revealed in *Redemption*, in issue 134 (March 1988). Furness's next step fell back on an old Marvel formula of introducing characters from other strips into **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE** in the hope that predominantly **DOCTOR WHO** (or for that matter comic) fans would be encouraged to follow a new title. In issue 135 (April 1988), the Doctor found his TARDIS colliding in the time vortex with the



**DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE** Doctor Who (1990) - Artwork by John Ridgway

## BUMPER FUN

During 1988, Marvel issued a one off **MARVEL BUMPER COMIC HOLIDAY SPECIAL** which reprinted *The Crossroads of Time* - the **DOCTOR WHO**/Death's Head crossover - in colour. This went down so well that Marvel UK decided to reprint the idea on a regular basis with a fortnightly reprint title sampling a variety of their output - entitled **THE MARVEL BUMPER COMIC** issue 1 (1st October 1988) started reprinting *Claws of the Klisk!* from **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE** in six half-installments. By this time it was clear that this type of title would not sustain itself on a regular basis, and the run was aborted some time later.



**DOCTOR WHO** MAGAZINE entered the publication's tenth anniversary year during 1989, with Freeman's influence as editor ever stronger. On the main strip, the year started with a brief return of *Ridgway* on *Echoes of the Mogor* before embarking on another rotation of artists. Doug Brathwaite and Dave Elliott oversaw *Time and Tide*, an enjoyable story with some suitably amazing illustrations. Followed that *TARDIS!* in Issue 147 (April 1989) was an incredible jamming session between five artists, and was also an attempt to launch a couple of new Marvel characters - the Slocote Brothers, created by John Canall and drawn by Andy Lanning, who got their own short lived comic. This idea from Freeman was supervised by Richard Starkings, the former editor on the strip. *Invaders from Gaxia!* was one of the worst drawn strips of the year from Martin Griffiths and Cam Smith and written by 2000 AD writer Alan Grant, but was followed by the return of Absolut Dusk (after a nine year absence) and his first meeting with the Doctor in *Nemesis of the Daldak*. Written by John Tomlinson and Starkings under pen-names, Sullivan returned to the strip with a dynamic and stylish conflict against the Daldak. The subsequent strip, *Strawberry to Heaven* was of note since the plot came from Paul Cornell, a talented and imaginative fan writer who later became a prolific writer on Virgin's **DOCTOR WHO - THE NEW ADVENTURES** books.

A perfect board special celebrating ten years of the Marvel/DOCTOR WHO connection was issued in October 1989. **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE 1979-1989** did not contain any strips, but had an overview of the publication's history with new artwork from Gibbons, Austin, Ridgway and Sullivan depicting the Doctors from Tom Baker onwards. Towards the end of the year, Michael Boeson wrote three of articles about DOCTOR WHO strips for **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE** under the title *Strip!*, starting in Issue 153 (October 1989).

## ACROSS THE WATER

Over the Atlantic meanwhile, **DOCTOR WHO** continued its colourful monthly reprisals of Tom Baker strips from **DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY**, with Issue 15 (December 1985) seeing the debut of Peter Davison as a reprint of *The Tides of Time*, with the back-up material from **DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY** also running. O'Neill's articles increased in frequency and standard with interviews with Colin Baker, John Nathan-Turner and Terrance Dicks.

By 1986, **DOCTOR WHO** was running out of steam in the USA. The comics buyers were not terribly interested in the film as a comic, and the die-hard **DOCTOR WHO** fans purchased imported editions of **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE**. The final run of issues saw colour versions of most of the Davison storylines from **DOCTOR WHO MONTHLY** - stopping abruptly with *Lunar Lagoon*. The back-up strip meanwhile extended into the **DOCTOR WHO - A MARVEL MONTHLY** period.

## DEATH'S HEAD REVISITED

By 1986, the Doctor had almost evolved into a Marvel Superhero in addition to being a character from a BBC Television series. Just as the Doctor had come up against Marvel characters such as the Slocote Brothers, Death's Head, Kheops and the Freefall Warriors in his strip, so the Doctor could also turn up guesting in other Marvel products. The first example of this was *Death's Head*, a Marvel UK title for the US market which was written by Parkhouse and followed the adventures of the robot he man, Death's Head. Issue 8 (July 1986) featured the story *Time Bomb!*, in which Jonah W. Dogbother (who had featured in Parkhouse strips for **DOCTOR WHO MONTHLY**) loved Death's Head to finish off the Doctor once and for all. The comic was a lot more jokey than usual Doctor Who entries, beginning with the Doctor appearing in postmodern as a jester at a seaside pier.

## THE INCREDIBLE DOCTOR WHO

Marvel UK made another attempt at launching a semi-superhero and action comic for younger readers. The weekly **THE INCREDIBLE HULK PRESENTS** debuted with Issue 1 dated 7th October 1986, and (alongside *Action Force*, *Judicia Jones* and *The Last Crusade* and the jelly green giant himself) included some lightweight adventures based on **DOCTOR WHO** featuring Sylvester McCoy as the Doctor. Written by the likes of Dan Abnett, John Freeman and John Tomlinson, the best of the stories was *Who's Your Girl?* for Issues 8 and 9 (26th November and 3rd December 1986), in which a beautiful girl turns up at a peace conference in the TARDIS, claiming to be a regeneration of the Doctor. The art was by the likes of Cam Smith and Geoff Senior (very concerned, bold and simplistic), although John Ridgway did contribute one of the more serious scenes. *Hunger from the End of Time!* in Issue 2 and 3 (14th and 21st October 1986). The stories were normally one issue long and consisted of five pages. A thirteenth strip - *Doctor Conker!* was prepared for Issue

13, but after the rapid demise of **THE INCREDIBLE HULK PRESENTS** was finally published in **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE**.

## THREE-LEGGED RACE

At the start of 1985, the BBC and Polystyle Publications attempted to launch a comic that would grab the **LOOK-IN** market and act as a replacement for **TV COMIC**. The result was **BEES - The BBC Junior Television Magazine**, with Issue 1 dated 29th January - 4th February 1985 and Dennis Hooper in the editorial seat. In amongst the articles, pin-ups and profiles could be found comic strips based on **AUTOMAN**, **ONE BY ONE**, **GRANGE HILL** and the BBC's SF adventure serial, **THE TRIPODS** which had started in September 1964. **THE TRIPODS** was set in the year 2089 when the Earth was ruled by huge metal machines called the Tripods. Three youths, Will, Henry and Scampole, tried to evade having their minds controlled by a process called 'capping' and fled across Europe for the safety of a settlement in the White Mountains. The comic strip, drawn with action by John M. Burns (who had created *Flux* of *Daisy Fyde* for the new **EAGLE**), was the highlight of the comic.

*The Tripods* spanned three pages each week, a colour autospread and one black-and-white page. The storyline, possibly by Pat Mills, was on-going with some serial elements running for a few issues. It began during the fourth episode of the first BBC serial as the trio passed through the ruins of Paris, and then headed off at a tangent to the TV version. Licences and styles were reproduced faithfully from the series. To increase interest in the strip for girls a new young woman character called Fizzie joined the lads on their journey. Unfortunately, **BEES** fared very badly and vanished without a trace after Issue 13 (23rd - 29th April 1985) was published. Plans for an annual of **THE TRIPODS** were aborted with some artwork already produced.



**BEES** *The Tripods* (1985) - Black and white artwork by John Burns

## A TALE OF TWO ROBINS

Whilst **BEES**'s life was brief, **LOOK-IN** continued to thrive, with *Robin of Sherwood* a popular item in the magazine. Although back on air during the spring with a second season, Noble's strip remained in black and white. By and large, the strips became extremely controversial with Robin's men planning an attack on the Sheriff, the Sheriff infiltrating the men's men or both sides combating a third party. For a couple of issues over the summer and towards the end of the year, another unknown artist handled the strip, and some later instalments in November and December were possibly another artist imitating Noble. The most bizarre storyline of the year was the final one which, starting in Issue 50 (7th December 1985), saw Robin barred back to prehistoric times by De Wyke, a bizarre scientist who performed magic at an ancient burial mound and hypnotised Glabrene and the Sheriff.

*Robin of Sherwood* had his last adventure in 1986 both on television and **LOOK-IN**. Although killed at the end of season two of the television series, Michael Fretz's version of the hero had continued as the chief movie man through 1985 and right up to Issue 14 (29th March 1986) of the new year. At this time, the third and final television run began, with Jason Connery taking over the lead, becoming the second Robin to replace his deceased namesake. Issues 15 and 16 which began a new storyline



were promoted to colour, coinciding with the return of the show to British screens, but Noble's first depiction of Cessney did not come until issue 17 (19th April 1986) by which time the new character was established with the viewers. However, after this story the strip became a timeshifter again and descended to previous levels. The final three storylines again may have been drawn by a Noble imitator, and the strip limped

LOOK-IN: Noble of Sherwood (1988) - Black and white artwork by Mike Noble

out with a weak two parter in issue 39 (20th September 1986), a few months after the series had finished.

## REPRINT ACTION

Since Spring 1981, long time Gerry Anderson fan Dave Nightingale had been publishing a quality fanzine called *SiG* (formerly *SUPERMARKETION IS GO*) dedicated to Anderson television shows. In 1983, Nightingale secured the rights to reprint material from *TV CENTURY 21*, *TV 21* and *LADY FENELope* from Express Newspapers, and his publishing company of Eagle Marketing created *ACTION 21*, a lavish publication of twenty colour pages which revived strips based on the Anderson series. The 'editor' was Brent Clever, and the magazine was crafted by Graham Bleethman in the style of *TV CENTURY 21* complete with colour photos and news headlines, starting with issue 1 dated July 1988. Ten issues were produced before the magazine became uneconomical given the limited readership. Eagle combined *ACTION 21* with *SiG* to re-emerge as *CENTURY 21*.

## VILLAGE IDIOTS

*THE PRISONER* finally made it as a comic strip some twenty years after its first appearance on TV, adopting the form of a four issue mini-series from D.C. Comics in America - Book 4 being issued in December 1988. With advice from Bruce Clark, a leading figure in of Six of One (*THE PRISONER* Appreciation Society) Dave Motter and Mark Asmloff wrote a story set twenty years after the series in which a woman security operative resigned her job and set off on a world yachting voyage. A storm shipwrecked the heroine in the Village which was now abandoned apart from the ancient bearded figure of Number 6. Also heading towards the Village was the final Number 2, as played by Leo McKern. The British and American intelligence agencies were also keen to crack the riddle of the Village. The serial generally failed to capture the unique spirit of the series, and delighted in in-jokes that added little to the storyline: the yacht leaves from 'Port Mancus', Stead and Mrs Peel attend the funeral in *Book*



THE PRISONER (1989) - Colour artwork by Dean Motter

and a plethora of penny-farthings are hidden in the artwork. The mini-series was badly received by the fans, but liked by the comic world who enjoyed Motter's artwork. The issues were collected together and issued with a new introduction as *THE PRISONER - SHATTERED VISION*, a trade paperback published in May 1990.

## 1990 - 1994

### LIFE AFTER DEATH

As a cost cutting measure for *DOCTOR WHO* MAGAZINE, one of the first strips of 1990 was a reprint from *THE INCREDIBLE HULK PRESENTS*. The next strip, *Train-Flight*, was drawn by Rigby, and saw the McCoy Doctor saving Sarah Jane Smith to a concert. The return of Sarah was instigated by Freeman who realised that most fans were lovers of continuity. Issue 162 contained a text story *Living in the Past* by fan writer Andy Lane (another *New Adventures* talent) which saw Ace, as played by Sophie Aldred, finally joining the Doctor. Alongside this was *Doctor Cosmos!* which would have appeared in the aborted *THE INCREDIBLE HULK PRESENTS*.

During 1990, it became clear that the twenty-seventh season of *DOCTOR WHO* was not going to be airing in September of that year. Andrew Cartmel, the show's last script editor, submitted *Fellow Travellers*, a highly atmospheric serial illustrated in fine near photographic style by Arthur Ranson. Ace now joined the Doctor in the strips. From issue 164 (18th September 1990), the magazine was issued on a four week rota, giving an extra issue each year. The concluding strips of the year were written by assistant editor Dan Abbott and drawn by Sullivan. The first two, *Darkness*, *Falling* in issue 167 (28th November 1990) and *Distraction* in issue 168 (26th December 1990) were just the preludes to *The Mark of Mandragora*, which began in issue 169 (23rd January 1991).

A new irregular element from issue 157 (February 1990) was *The Cosmic Accusation*, a one page strip by Kevin Suberland and Steve Noble in which two viewers generally poked fun at a story they were watching on television - this being a popular item appreciated by the fans. Two of the Archive features which distilled the show's history were introduced by colour one-page adaptations of old stories, with stylish and colourful art by the talented fan artist Colin Howard. Another item introduced by Freeman was *Brief Encounters*, a one-page story that dealt with an incident in the life of a character from the series. This began in issue 167 (28th November 1990) with a piece by John Lucarotti, who had written Hixell serials in the 1980s. Also in issue 167 was an article by Freeman writing as Paul Travers (one of the Zero X crew) called *Stripped for action?*. This examined the development of the comic strip during the Marvel days, and printed the first twelve instalments of *Terror from the Deep*, a daily newspaper strip written by Freeman and drawn by Gary Dolan that featured the Dulicks - and which nobody wanted to purchase.

*The Mark of Mandragora* was Sullivan's final regular strip for *DOCTOR WHO* MAGAZINE before being lured away to work on *ROBOCOP*. The serial was very distinctive, seeing the return not only of the Mandragora Helix from the 1976 serial *The Masque of Mandragora* but also UNIT, now commanded by Colonel Frost (a now semi-regular character) and Brigadier Leithbridge-Stewart. The high drama of this was followed by *Party Animals* in issue 175 (15th May 1991), a fan strip by Gary Russell in which the Doctor met up with his future self at a massive party. Amongst the revellers in Collins' slightly caricatured artwork could be seen Skye, a Kluge, a Wrath Warrior, the Firefall Warriors, a Sontaran, Dr. Asimoff, Sapphire and Steel, Death's Head, Boop the Meep, Abiwee Daak and Mrs Peel... amongst others! Sullivan returned briefly for a Cornell instalment called *The Chameleon Factor* in issue 174 (12th June 1991) before Collins resumed in issue 175 (10th July 1991) for *The Good Soldier*. This grisly story, by Cartmel, took the strip into new territories: the horrific attempts of the Cybermen to link a human into their war computer was presented in a manner reminiscent of American horror comics of the 1950s. Richard Whisker's one issue of highly stylised squared-off art in *A Glitch in Time* filled issue 179 (30th October 1991) just prior to another format revision. A *DOCTOR WHO* MAGAZINE SUMMER SPECIAL issued in July reprinted location guides from recent years, alongside a strip set at the seaside.

### LOST EMPIRES

Issue 180 (27th November 1991) saw *DOCTOR WHO* MAGAZINE moving further into specialist territory. Introduced was a colour reproduction of pages from *TV CENTURY 21*'s *The Dulicks*, this time unedited. Richard Piers Rayner's first strip, *Evening's Empire* by Cartmel, made its debut with stunning near-photographic art. Unfortunately, Rayner's detailed work took longer than Marvel expected. This, combined with postal problems, meant that the remaining four instalments failed to arrive on time, and the slot was filled by reprint material and a new

new strip material retained in issue 185 (15th April 1992) with *The Grief*, a rather routine affair inspired by Vincent Banks' use of photographs to get the likenesses of the Doctor and Ace (Danks also drew the City of Devils strip for that summer's *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE HOLIDAY SPECIAL*). Long time writer Gary Russell took over as editor with issue 186, combining his love of comics with his knowledge of the series to take the magazine to a pinnacle of success. The next strip by Cartmel was an adult view of the series: *Raven* drawn by Williamson was a violent tale of a vicious street gang. Issue 190 (2nd September 1992) introduced *Prelude*, a series of introductions to Virgin Books' *Doctor Who - The New Adventures*. New Zealander Warwick Gray made his writing debut with the excellent *Memorial* in issue 191 (9th September 1992). The creative network came from Ridgway, who was also responsible for the exceptionally good *Get Litter* by Marc Platt (who had written the TV serial *Ghost Light*). Colin Andrew joined the strip with issue 193 (25th November 1992) when he illustrated the Sentran strip *Pareblood* and introduced the Doctor's new companion Bernice (a character developed for *The New Adventures*). The same issue saw the final instalment of *The Daleks*, now destined for a new home in *DOCTOR WHO CLASSIC COMICS* (see later). The winning combination of Gray and Ridgway developed a *Time Lord* origin story entitled *Flashback* for the *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE WINTER SPECIAL* that November.



**DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE HOLIDAY SPECIAL** City of Devils (1992) - Black and white artwork by Vincent Banks

The first new comic strip of *DOCTOR WHO*'s thirtieth anniversary year was *Empress of the Daleks*, a continuity intensive exercise in Dalek history from Cornell which explained what happened between TV series and connected Abolish Dalek - with Sullivan returning to handle the artwork. The Daleks were also at large in *Bringer of Darkness*, Gray's excellent down-beat encounter between the Treglown Doctor and his arch-enemies, crafted by Martin Goughy for Jane's *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE SUMMER SPECIAL*. Ace returned to the strip and Andrew returned to the art chores with *Final Genesis* in *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE* issue 203 (1st September 1993), which had to be partially redrawn to remove frames showing a naked woman from issue 202. The thirtieth anniversary edition, issue 207 (22nd December 1993) included a colour strip, *Time & Time Again* in which Cornell skillfully wove together possibly the only successful attempt to stage an adventure with all seven Doctors, illustrated by Ridgway. Ridgway also gave his atmospheric talents to *Cuckoo*, the first strip of 1994's run. There was no strip in *Marvel's* thirtieth anniversary special magazine.

After another excellent Gray/Ridgway one-off (*Uninvited Guest* in issue 211), a revised format was determined for the strip. Russell had decided that the absence of the series meant that there was now no reason that the strip should be restricted to adventures with the McCoy Doctor. Accordingly, it was Tom Baker's Doctor who emerged from the TARDIS in *Vicktor* in issue 212 (11th May 1994), whilst it was Peter Davison's incarnation who faced a pair of killer crows in *The Lunar Strangers* from issue 215 (3rd August 1994), the same issue in which Adrian Salmon's heavily stylised one page strip *The Cyberman* began. *DOCTOR WHO SUMMER SPECIAL*, devoted to the Hartnell and McCoy Doctors, included two linked comic narratives from Gray featuring the two Doctors handling the same situation in different ways. As *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE* continued to go from strength to strength under the editorial guidance of Gary Russell and Marcus Hearn in 1994, a new strip called

*Food for Thought* by Nicholas Briggs captured the spirit of the late Hartnell adventures very well. With Gary Gillen arriving at *Marvel* in December 1994 to take over from Gary Russell (who became group editor), further period strips were lined up - including a *Purview* tale from Virgin novelist Kate Orman and a *Treglown* serial from Warwick Gray (who by now had joined *Marvel* as an editorial assistant). Although the series is at present no more, the magazine's a foremost figure in *DOCTOR WHO*'s life after death.

## CLASSIC COLLECTION

With interest in *DOCTOR WHO* extremely high *Marvel* launched a second title based on the series. John Freeman had attempted to launch collected reprints in the early 1990s, but it was Gary Russell who achieved this in 1992 with *DOCTOR WHO CLASSIC COMICS*, which alternated on a fortnightly basis with *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE*.

As well as printing old comic strips (colourised if necessary but unredrawn), related comic covers and adverts were also reproduced and John Ainsworth contributed articles concerning the strip developments with *Behind the Frame*. Key points of interest were the *COUNTDOWN* and *TV ACTION* strips, plus the *TV CENTURY 21* strip *The Daleks* (which moved over from *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE*). Beautiful cover paintings were provided by Alistair Pearson, Colin Howard, Steve Whitaker, Bill Mevin and others.

*DOCTOR WHO CLASSIC COMICS* continued into 1993 rotating strips from the different Doctors. The first *TV COMIC* strip featuring the Hartnell, Treglown, Purview and Tom Baker Doctors were printed, now colourised by Louise Connell and Christina McCormack. Other issues collected thematic strips such as issue 8 (23rd June 1993) which incorporated all three of John Canning's Tred storylines. Issue 9 (21st July 1993) was a reprint of the Dell Comics adaptation of *DR WHO AND THE DALEKS*, whilst issues 10 and 11 (18th August, 15th September 1993) presented *The Tides of Time*, a strip which many readers wished to see - the colours provided by fan artist Paul Vyse.

September 1993 saw the release of *DOCTOR WHO CLASSIC COMICS: Eonway's Empire*, the ill-fated strip which began two years earlier in *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE*. The project had been completed by Rayner, and after some modification to the opening episode, was released by Vyse. Cartmel's story showed how comics could be an effective medium for *DOCTOR WHO*, blending superbly with Rayner's detailed artwork to produce a stylish nightmare.

Issue 11 (15th September 1993) saw *Ainsworth's Behind the Frame* items replaced by *Voynich Voynich* (the traditional comic noise of the TARDIS) which was an in-depth look at each *DOCTOR WHO* related comic strip. With issue 15 (15th January 1994), four pages of the publication were devoted to presenting television of missing *DOCTOR WHO* episodes (which crossed over to *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE*). The most popular items remained the *TV CENTURY 21* material, the *TV ACTION* strips and choice *Marvel* items such as *Stars Fall* on *Blackbridge*. The Daleks completed their run in issue 19 (27th April 1994), although the whole run of 104 instalments were collected together that Summer in *THE DALEK CHRONICLES*. To give a balance across all seven Doctors without reproducing recent *DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE* material, colourised McCoy strips from *THE INCREDIBLE HULK PRESENTS* began with issue 23 (22nd June 1994) which gained a superb cover artist in Paul Campbell.

With the exclusion of nearly all the *TV ACTION* material and the absence of the Daleks, it was anticipated that the title would become increasingly difficult to fill with quality material. In September 1994 the decision to cancel *DOCTOR WHO CLASSIC COMICS* with issue 27 (7th December 1994) was taken, clearing the way for *Marvel's* new *DOCTOR WHO POSTER MAGAZINE* (a title which did not include comic material). The final issue wrapped up the *TV ACTION* items and offered a comprehensive index to the title's contents by Ainsworth.

## DEATH'S HEAD REVISITED - AGAIN

By 1993, *Death's Head* was turning out to be one, or rather two, of the most popular characters *Marvel UK* produced. Starting in January 1993, a twelve book series entitled *THE INCOMPLETE DEATH'S HEAD* was issued, incorporating a new plot from editor John Freeman in which the new *Death's Head* discovered an archive on the planet Marathos and encounters an avatar of the original robot in cyberspace - until the Doctor turns up to stop the two *Death's Heads* fighting. The story, scripted by Abnett, allowed reprints of *Death's Head* material from various sources including *The Crossroads of Time* in issue 1, *Koegler* in issues 4 and 5 (April/May 1993), *Time Break* in issue 9 (September 1993) and *Party Animals* in issues 12 (December 1993) - all of which were colourised. Tim Quinn took over as editor from issue 2, followed by David Leach from issue 7.



## THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO - AGAIN!

Accompanied by a huge publicity campaign that still caught manufacturers' attentions, THUNDERBIRDS was purchased by BBC2 and screened from the Autumn of 1991, gaining even more popularity than in the Sixties. Fleetway were one of the few merchandisers with a product in waiting, a full colour 24 page comic which was issued fortnightly and comprised reprints of Bellamy's legendary comic from TV CENTURY 21. Other highlights were contemporary cutaways of vehicles by artist Graham Bleethman, plus an array of photographs including new shots by Martin Beaver. The lead strip from issue 4 (30th November 1991) onwards was an adaptation of a TV episode written by Alne Fennell, who was the comic's editor. The first example of this was Steve Kyte's excellent *The Pit of Peril*.

Such was the demand for THUNDERBIRDS - THE COMIC that Fleetway had under-estimated the supply of the first three issues. In March 1992 these were republished in a single special as the first of two editions entitled THUNDERBIRDS THE COLLECTION. Reprints of *Lady Penelope* from TV CENTURY 21 began with issue 9 (5th February 1992), starting with the final storyline. As Bleethman's cutaways began to exhaust themselves, the artist moved over to work on Fleetway's new companion comic, STINGRAY - THE COMIC (see later). Mike Noble painted some special posters for both THUNDERBIRDS - THE COMIC and editions of THUNDERBIRDS POSTER MAGAZINE, but the general style of the comic lacked the care and attention of the original 1960s editions. Title captions frequently changed between stories and layout errors were not uncommon (generally blamed on the Hoof). On the new strips adapted from teleplays, Kyte was succeeded by D. M. Stokes on a last-minute *Sasprobe* and then by Keith Page on *Terror in New York City*. Page, who had been drawing the material in *THE FUNDAY TIMES* (see later), was to become principle artist on the strip, and although his compositions echoed the work of Bellamy, his figure work and detail was weak. Kyte's second strip was an excellent version of *The Unwanted*, followed by a return to the Anderson fold for Keith Watson in a stylish *City of Fire* (Watson sadly died in 1994). The artists for the remainder of the year also included Jon Howard doing a poor *The Man from M.J.S.* and Rod Vase on a bold but lifeless *The Break of Disaster*.

## TO VENUS WITH LOVE

In April 1992, Fleetway issued a THUNDERBIRDS HOLIDAY SPECIAL which showcased the epic TV CENTURY 21 storyline in which International Rescue travelled to the planet Venus. With all the Fennell teleplays used up original strips were created from issue 34 (23rd January 1992) onwards with Page and Stokes handling most of the new material. It was clear that the original TV CENTURY 21 material was being rapidly used up, and so the number of reprints each issue was reduced. More space was devoted to photographs, artwork and adverts. The strips based on FIREBALL XLS started with issue 35 (5th February 1992) beginning with the Noble material. The same issue saw the debut of *The Complete Thunderbirds Story*, a long-running affair that varied between one and three pages of airbrush artwork on the contrapunt, telling how Jeff Tracy's dream of International Rescue became a reality.

A second THUNDERBIRDS HOLIDAY SPECIAL was published in April 1993: another complete Bellamy *Thunderbirds* serial was paired off with the final Don Lawrence *Fireball XLS* story. On THUNDERBIRDS - THE COMIC, the TV CENTURY 21 and TV 21 material had run out, so starting with issue 46 (10th - 23rd July 1992) came coloured reprints of the final Bellamy strip from TV21 and JOE 90, whereas the John Cooper material from that comic was also coloured for reprint. It was with this issue that John Cooper began work on the title, creating a series of new and colourful storylines (particularly the excellent *Shift of Doom*) alongside the reprints and Page's work. Mike White came on board with issue 53 (16th - 29th October 1992) to help on the new strips, delivering *Disasters Unleashed*, an imaginative thriller.



THE NEW THUNDERBIRDS. Thunderbirds (1994) - Artwork by Steve Kyte

Still the reprint material was running out. When all the instalments of *Lady Penelope* from TV CENTURY 21 had been exhausted, readers were treated to a coloured version of Hampton's strip from the 1965 TV CENTURY 21 SUMMER EXTRA. From issue 59 (8th - 21st January 1994), a real treat was in store: Frank Langford's colour strip from *Lady Penelope*. Issue 60 saw the last reprint strip of *Thunderbirds*, placing more of a burden on Fennell's team to produce new material. Few of these were of any note apart from two stories by Graham Bleethman: *Highway to Disaster* (with guest star Tony Curtis) and *The Return of the Zombies*. By Spring 1994, it was clear that the dwindling stocks of 1960s material and the lower sales of the two companion titles (see later) were pointing firmly towards a new future for all three comics. The final issue of THUNDERBIRDS - THE COMIC was issue 66 (29th April 1994).

## POSTER MAGS ARE GO!

Starting in February 1992, a series of THUNDERBIRDS POSTER MAGAZINES were issued by Fleetway, showcasing photographs of the craft and sometimes a self-contained seven page comic strip. These were generally not up to the standards of the parent comic, with art from Nigel Parkinson and Keith Page amongst others.

## FUN ON SUNDAY

At the same time as the launch of THUNDERBIRDS - THE COMIC, THE FUNDAY TIMES - the children's issue into THE SUNDAY TIMES - started to run a *Thunderbirds* strip as well as reprinting Bleethman's cutaway views. In issue 130 (13th October 1991), Fennell presented the format of the series to young readers with art from veteran strip artist Keith Page. From the following week, Page then drew a single page of colour art telling new storylines by Fennell.

Almost a year later, *Thunderbirds* was replaced by *Stingray* in issue 158 (13th September 1993) as the BBC course hit the airwaves, with Fennell and Page continuing to provide a page of action each week. The initial storyline which ran to a notable eighteen weeks was a very interesting affair in which various forms of marine life attacked Marinville. However, it was still *Thunderbirds* that the readers wanted, and so with issue 185 (28th March 1993) the Tracy boys were back. The arc of the new storylines was a very long affair which contained various twists and turns in the fortunes of the earthquake-stricken country of Lathain - a land caught in a power struggle between two brothers. International Rescue's intervention eventually brought about peace talks, but then a second tragedy struck as the Penfold ship the delegation to the conference was forced down in the Alps and buried in an avalanche. The licence to do a similar CAPTAIN SCARLETT AND THE MYSTERIONS based strip went elsewhere, so *Thunderbirds* ran its course through to issue 246 (22nd May 1994). The following week saw the return of another Anderson character, Joe 90, drawn with style by John Cooper from Fennell's storylines. It is the WIN agent who, at the time of writing, is still undercover at a Wild West rodeo...

## STAND BY FOR ACTION!

With the success of THUNDERBIRDS - THE COMIC, a sister publication to coincide with the re-issuing of STINGRAY was inevitable, again using reprint material. STINGRAY - THE COMIC offered a staple diet of Enklester reprints from TV CENTURY 21, the adventures of Marina from LADY FENELPHE and wonderful cutaways from Bleethman. Kyte contributed a stunning two-page introduction to the series in issue 4 (21st November - 4th December 1992), and from issue 5 adaptations of TV episodes written by Fennell commenced. These ran until issue 16 (8th - 21st May 1993), by which time four Fennell scripts had been drawn by John Cooper and Nigel Parkinson (whose style emphasized the comic aspects). In May 1993, a STINGRAY HOLIDAY SPECIAL was issued, presenting a complete Michael Strand storyline from TV CENTURY 21.

The colour reprint material was soon used up and from issue 23 (14th - 27th August 1993) the remaining TV CENTURY 21 and TV 21 strips were coloured. A fortnight later, issue 24 (28th August 1993 - 24th September 1993) was the final issue of STINGRAY - THE COMIC, which was to carry on half as frequently as STINGRAY MONTHLY.

STINGRAY MONTHLY lasted into existence with an excellent Bleethman cover dated October 1993. The reprints continued along with Marina's perilous escapades, and several comical outings for Gink the Seal saw themselves pressed into service. By Volume 2 issue 4 (January 1994), the main reprint strip was the long storyline that concluded in TV 21 ran as Tracy apparently turned traitor. But STINGRAY had not been the secret hit as THUNDERBIRDS, and as the sporadic meetings would be a close in late 1993 it was clear that if Trey and Phoenix were to battle on a night was imminent. Volume 2 issue 5 (May 1994) saw *Stingray*'s last solo outing...

THE CRAFTADAPPER IS SUGGESTING IT THEY  
VANISHED AND SHEEP BY, IGNORING STINGRAY.



THE NEW THUNDERBIRDS Stingray (1994). Colour artwork by John Cooper

## THE RETURN OF THE INVINCIBLE MAN

Undeterred by the lack of STINGRAY appeal, BBC1 opted for the more memorable adventures of CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS for Autumn 1993. Again, Flewmy and Fennell were ready with CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS Issue 1 (23rd October 1993) to reprint the Spectator escapades on a fortnightly basis. Many elements of the line-up were predictable: colour reprints of classic artwork from TV CENTURY 21 and TV 21, and outcrops from Bleethman. With no Fennell teleplays to adapt, new comic strips were also introduced from the first issue, with Mike White delivering a tough new Scarlet adventure with technology that appealed more to the youngsters of the Nineties. Readers could also delight in reprints of Mike Noble's Zero X and The Angels from THE NEW LADY PENELOPE.

One of the delights about CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS was the colourisation of black and white artwork which was usually subtle and less intrusive than on its two companion titles. But again Scarlet did not have the appeal of the Tracy boys, and with the eager young (and old) Anderson devotees now purchasing three different titles - with a fourth on the horizon - it was time for a rethink. Issue 14 (6th May 1994) concluded the run of CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS as the BBC means dwindled away for the summer.

## SCARLET ON SUNDAY

In addition to reprint escapades in his own title, Spectrum's indestructible agent was active in another new strip from 10th October 1993. For those who could wade through the NEWS OF THE WORLD to the colour magazine entitled SUNDAY, Captain Scarlet could be found nesting on a cartoon page with Sonic the Hedgehog and The Flintstones, brother brand new Myxeron schemes for three or four times each week courtesy of John Cooper - a strip which at time of writing is on going.

## CAPTAIN SCARLET



## THE BIG THREE

It had to happen. To the delight of comic collectors who wanted to keep costs low and had become tired of trying to track three different titles down, Flewmy merged their Anderson titles into THE NEW THUNDERBIRDS featuring CAPTAIN SCARLET & STINGRAY, starting with Issue 67 (13th May 1994). The first issue was a delight, with Kyla returning to deliver a fantastic Thunderbirds serial called Visitors of the Past. The rest of the line up included Fireball XL3, Zero X, Lady Penelope, The Angels, Stingray and Captain Scarlet, although with the

latter, there were still some strips newly created to see up. Sadly, Marine was not continued from STINGRAY MONTHLY, and The Complete Thunderbirds Story travelled along on its rather bland way.

Stingray was the first strip to falter, with the TV 21 material ending in Issue 69 (10th June 1994). It was Kyla to the rescue with fresh material before the team fell back on material from Sixties Holiday Specials. White, Cooper and Page continued on the new Thunderbirds material and the excellent reprints and the highly acceptable new strips continued to make THE NEW THUNDERBIRDS... an extremely pleasing title. But by now the boom was well past. Issue 79 (27th October 1994) saw the final instalment of The Complete Thunderbirds Story (a partial adaptation of the pilot episode of the series), and this was replaced in Issue 80 (11th November 1994) by the ill-coloured adventures of Joe 90 who had transferred from his own comic (see later). This was the final issue to carry a regular Stingray strip (a reprint of one of the episode adaptations from STINGRAY - THE COMIC), which in turn meant that the tide had to change. On lower quality paper and with fewer pages, THE NEW THUNDERBIRDS COMIC (Issue 82 (9th December 1994) was relaunched... leading up to a bumper Christmas special in which it was indicated several of the ongoing storylines were to be concluded. At the time of writing, the final end of the new Superanimation revival is as yet unknown...

## BLAKE IS BACK

Marvel Comics UK started to issue a BLAKE'S 7 POSTER MAGAZINE in October 1994, and then re-entered the world of BLAKE'S 7 comic strips with their BLAKE'S 7 WINTER SPECIAL the following December. Although the title was essentially an episode guide souvenir, it also included Blackpool, a strip written by Gareth Roberts that was superbly illustrated by Martin Geraghty in a bold and caricatured manner. Unlike the earlier Marvel strips, this was not rooted in the fourth season - and the attention to detail makes it stand as probably the best strip based on the series.

## AN UNLIKELY WINNER

And just when you thought it was safe to get up on a Saturday, BBC1 slipped JOE 90 into their schedules in late Spring 1994. Alan Fennell dug out his lackluster JOE 90 - TOP SECRET after twenty-five years to restructure three of their adventures each week as JOE 90, starting with Issue 1 dated 29th July 1994. Although Bleethman's outcrops were again a delight, the artwork of Aubrey and Watson was less appealing than Flewmy's other reprints, this was not helped by some very heavy-handed colouring. It cut and rushed, the sheer lack of reprint material soon indicated the imminent demise of the title. This came with Issue 7 (21st October 1994) as Joe was absorbed into the combination parcel title.

## A CHAOTIC AGE

In early 1993, it was decided to produce a special four-part mini-series DOCTOR WHO comic written by Colin Baker himself, mainly for the US market. However, problems with schedules and then the fact that the original artist, John Burns, was unable to continue working on the project after the first volume, meant that the strip, DOCTOR WHO - The Age of Chaos, was instead published in October 1994 as a 92 page special. Barrie Mitchell hastily completed the remaining pages of the story, a rather meandering epic in which the sixth Doctor and Frohser decided to take a look in on Peri and her family on Kronos. A far better strip was to be found in Plastic Milennium, another stylish entry from the Roberts/Geraghty team in that year's DOCTOR WHO WINTER SPECIAL.

## THE FUTURE IS FANTASTIC

And so over thirty-three years after Supercar became embroiled in its first TV COMIC plot with Mastempe, the parallel universes of British Television are still forging ahead in the comic dimension - as well as backtracking in the excellent manner of BBC2's archive repeats. DOCTOR WHO lives on in its many lives with Marvel Comics whilst the worlds of Gerry and Sylvia Anderson are still being exposed to new and eager audiences of young people, and devotees of the past trying to recapture the magic of childhood. Like television, comics have their own confines of standards, scope and audience - but are a fascinating opportunity to view well-known formats from often very different angles.



# THE AVENGERS

Published by arrangement with  
ABC Television Limited

THE "AVENGERS", John Steed  
and Emma Peel, were spending  
a quiet evening watching television.  
It was Steed's idea.



A ALLOW ME TO  
SWITCH ON YOUR  
SET, MRS PELL.



I'M NOT A TELEVISION  
ADDICT, YOU KNOW.  
BUT AN OLD FRIEND OF  
MINE, TOM PARTIDGE,  
IS ON TONIGHT. HE'S  
REPORTING A SERIES OF  
LODGING INTO A WEIRD  
NEW DISCOVERY.



The programme opened by showing an  
ordinary pet rabbit sitting peacefully in a  
cage.



Then the creator of the new  
discovery, Professor Klein, shows a  
powerful beam on the rabbit.



The result of the beam was frightening. Suddenly, the rabbit  
began to act like a ferocious animal, clawing at its cage with  
teeth and claws.



The programme ended with most of the  
audience convinced that Professor Klein's  
light beam was off the said it was.

I'M NOT SO SURE,  
PROFESSOR—YOU  
COULD HAVE  
INJECTED THE RABBIT  
WITH SOME DRUG  
BEFOREHAND.

L THE GREAT PROFESSOR KLEIN  
CAN CONTROL ANY ANIMAL WITH  
HIS BEAM—IT'S THE NEXT  
FANTASTIC DISCOVERY OF  
OUR TIME.



I WOULDN'T SAY THAT  
MRS PELL—STILL, WE'LL  
GET THE FULL STORY  
TOMORROW EVENING.  
TOM HAS INVITED US TO  
DINNER.

I MUST SAY YOUR  
FRIEND PARTIDGE  
MADE THE  
PROFESSOR LOOK  
LEATHER SLEAZY.



And so, the following evening, as Mrs Peel's ride takes John Steed,  
the Avengers arrive at Tom Partidge's country house.



Shouldn't Mrs Peel have  
surprised to find the house  
dark and empty again.

HELLO THERE—  
HAPPY REARDED  
ANYONE AT HOME?